

o·blēk

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In Memoriam:
Robert Duncan
1919–1988

³**oblique** (o•blēk) *v.* **1:** *trans.* To turn askew or in a sidelong direction. *Obs.* 1775 SHERIDAN *Rivals* IV.iii, When her love-eye was fixed on me, t'other, her eye of duty, was finally obliques. **2:** *intr.* Of a line, etc: to slant or slope at an angle. 1814 SCOTT *Wav.* XI, He achieved a communication with his plate by projecting his person towards it in a line which obliques from the bottom of his spine.

o·blēk/3

A JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE ARTS

EDITED BY
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THE GARLIC PRESS

o•blēk is

Editors: PETER GIZZI
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Design: CATHARYN TIVY

Many thanks to:
Rosmarie Waldrop, Michael Gizzi, Thomas McGrath,
Jason Embree, The Stockbridge Library, Benchmark
Graphics.

o•blēk is distributed by Bernhard DeBoer, Small Press
Distribution, and Segue.

AVIS, by Michael Gizzi, was first published in 1979
by Burning Deck.

All manuscripts should be accompanied by a self-
addressed, stamped envelope. Please allow us some time
to reply.

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Box 1242
Stockbridge, MA 01262

This issue was made possible by a donation from:
Thomas & Diahn McGrath

Contributions to this publication are welcome and fully
tax-deductible.

Founding Patrons:
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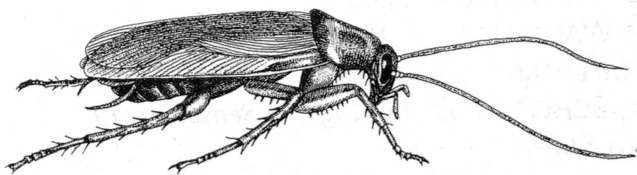
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Cover by Randy Wagner, Desert Landscape, Oil, 1986

Frontispiece by Ippy Patterson, Cockroach, Pen & Ink, 1987.

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OPENING POEM

Memory

*Is what Pavlov called
In the motor context
Trial movement
The dog for example 'training'
Salivates
So it happens that trend
Comes to play mammal
(Here too the herd learns
From the pioneer
Tradition
A certain kind of progress
Without a date objects
Like actual sticks
Branches on which fruit might
Hang
In arboreal habitat
The fruit a detour*

For the birds

from *AVIS* by Michael Gizzi

MICHAEL GIZZI

FROM *CONTINENTAL HARMONY*

THE RISINGDALE

A gardener's a bed book a pillow stalk
A dogwood text scratching
Taper on the pale rib petal. Vertical din
Helve dwelling on ahem
All sex aside then. Riverbanks
Tex, cubic leaves in oboe deep
St. John's emitic drink
Walt to the valves and partition. A hymn
In the horns to boot

First round draft chick. Sunnyside
Uppers. Mine of Miss O
Goggles that darting redound
To the dish, Alp me to a scribble
As I had hoped the face
On her hip but the fish got bigger
Beak conniving under balm
Southpaw at his sinuses, Woody
The shower drip geezer

Ring mob for a tripe rest
Study group of leaves more dignified than
Gout. Would I had ducks to stuff
Compounded foot of some fancied bugle
Cordaged in thicket in cabinet tan
Men in the minds of their women
Slickrock in a slot canyon
Even a morgue's got rules. Cremated
Fore we sold 'em on the sound

Musician diaphanous

TRIPLE A

for P.G.

Everlasting stufft bird, lexicon of hints
at torso. Haunted bowsprit. Emblem of female
sex—whoa! nelly, just a HURON!
Get a LARIAT on this tom foolery, bandsawing
the BUD! o let me put it this way AM/FM GALATEA,
COLORADO, you can hear my right arm up to here.
WEST PALM BEACH poking at an off-center piece of
ice. Got a bedroom upstairs bigger'n my highschool.
Beam and whisper. This MISSISSIPPI RIVER's
dogone deep and wi-wide. Baleful
exotic low bass booming over GUMBOOT CREEK.
Chair window scenery. Seen brown gal CHATTAHOOCHEE
JUBILEE, jazz in ignition. Okay. But could ya
fetch me a duck from the kitchen EDGEComb? Echoic
isn't it? Memory of eminence over JEWtown. Scarcely.
Your FANNY's mine LAREDO. Hefted. No more shining
big LEAF MTNS. GROG RUN over GRIEF HILL.
CHINOOK mountain jargon. Lady halfwhite, a cuestick
lookin nervous, Miss LIBERTY, you gotta believe me
I didn't see nothing on LOOK SHACK HILL. Sure,
blur the word, evenso, way to go D.C. comin through
the lie. And GRIPE, ARIZONA lest I forget
LACKAWANNA, MOSHASSUCK RIVER, magic narrative gospel
from above. ONAN origin of the feminine of hand
in the clear day roving. BODEGA shot with feathers,
a kind of cognate in late corruption. Later bodice,

also a surname, highly specific: CLARA BIRD'S
NIPPLE TIT BUTTE French 'breast' MAMELLE *pardon*,
MISSOURI Fox. Let me put it this way. Transfer
the feeling, sphere of influence THIRSTY CANYON
with head of woman and body to throb. What is
most lovely in railroad weeds (to pinnacle parts,
coin a phrase) eyes or navel? And it's wonderful
how unmonotonous they are and DODGE the saloon's
mimetic clams, an old cliché. Postcard from PRESCOTT.
Curvaceous dots suggest eyes. The one you see
'bout a mile wide and an inch deep. Move the picture up
off the picture plane. Jokily help nudge attention
to layers of unassuming FLATBUSH. Measure
net gain after SLAUGHTER in that SPIRIT.
Clouds and eggs went on as always about FLIRTATION PEAK.
I never liked SOLEDAD
reminds me how unalone I am. HARLEM WATTS MARIN.
Get a yankee stem on the hymn. Hustle
ye sons of HARMONY, HOMINY, beardless boys—ASYLUM,
P.A. Once again retreat into the day.
From the tip of POTOMAC to the whites of MOUNT VERNON
my men, not one unique. Not one alike.
Paid my dues. Reluctantly
gave up WIDOW'S PEAK, felt it
exactly in the button of my flank. Let me
put it this way, my town STOCKBRIDGE
screw the hydrangea. Obie ain't sheriff no more.
We drink to it. Me and him, that's UNION *thataway*

OMNIBUS VERSES

for Craig Watson

I don't see any method
Say it again it keeps me awake
Wish I had words
That's my headache.
Little nipper at the padlock
Nooned and lonered.
I wonder what's a misleading word
Is it?
Some of the rumors were fanned on purpose.
That should put a spanner in it

Seen a furlong parboiled
Of parquet. Sudden parvenu
And the inner ear begun to
Flag. Further shewn by the use short-a-fry
Code name: Punitive. Goon brooch
And a pint of branches
Supt on a wood verb fowl, for the most part
Palaver, carryin a stick however small
Of myrtle against weariness. November
Loaded with sculpture
Without a word

Try not to react with glee. Your
Shaving brush of witchery.
They brute the town frequently
Finish your spinach, then
You can plate some bullets
Strop the nitrates with comely strip
Man has London on beef, centerpiece
Of Europa gallant. Juicy hit in
Dryform gummer

Mind one western mow, Eyemark which
I've sent you talons I've had
The heads affixed.
I wonder luster or a wish
A higher finish relish? Memory pickles best
Robbie who wolfed and got dangerous
Chamber retort quartet.
Music ghetto for wind

I wonder what's a miss
Porno-wise? 70 quid and a butt of sack
Vernacular snatches I skim
With my doldrum
Hope for the image
I can masturbate
To, indefatigable doozy

PERSONAL NARRATIVE

First came the flagellants
'I win by being gaunt'
Built a booth in a swamp

and the subwaking self
ploughed under.
Turn up the truth

At the heart of the world
is the reptile
a mineral bird. My wilderness beat

They said of the man
he died a boy.
Drowning shines an idol

queer cuss in a crystal tux
nest along the mists
(My little girl Grace)

Cuckoo in the wild who toots a fourth
a deck of attention in the quoted
sound. Arc as a length of a clef

From the midnerve copse
A narrative
the object of my Captivity

ROSMARIE WALDROP

IN ANYONE'S LANGUAGE

whom I'd tried to approach,
you, in your chair, make
you see though I was,
had, exhausted

the question, I had to
agree, coming back to where the map,
that is knee-deep or
farther, and not telling you, not
in that way

my trying, when the map, scaled down
it seemed, would help to know what I "want" and
what is a word, more having
an interest in facts, or Shakespeare,
the snow weighing down
the branches, not feeling

when, in anyone's language
events withdraw, you,
more as if prepositions
had force, attentive to,
one must think of, in writing that is,
everything except meaning

except dawn, not like
a name that's been spilled, but finally
does not reveal anything, not
to write about

the name, why go on calling it, more demanding
an obstacle, a lock on limits, having
already struggled, it
does no good, like giving in
to a cough

believing it can be met, the need
to talk in the wind, in
constituents

or to, this need so
exhausting, regardless
of cold fingers that more
and more than necessary
one does not use nouns

so I ask myself when even
the president
though the atmosphere all turned
and to be silent
the trucks heading north

taking up the road, the trucks,
 heading north, when writing
 makes it bearable, grammar
 so exciting, to put together
 or time, to take up time

holding on to myself, fumbling with
 the need to say "I", but half-
 heartedly, pronouns can be so
 mistaken, so without

you might grasp at,
 for safety, a point of view agreeing,
 like a verb, having to, with whatever you do,
 but disturbing
 nothing or in rocky
 terrain only

what's called a normal
life, a series, but how long, of grainy
mistakes and irritating
if you feel that way
about mistakes
when you rather than be afraid
of words

or not really afraid
but a sense, on an empty
stomach, of having
already said more, hauled water
from, than was there

an error fiddling
with, or that a task could,
while they happen to you,
circumscribe, the most terrible
things happen

you're washing
your hands when the dark
by any other name
or help you with
illusions pale as,
but contingent on, the roar
in the ear

when you talk across, from a dream
about winter, your refusal
to talk, in anyone's language,
it helps you, even if it distracts,
to go with nouns, to have
that choice, even bold ones like "love"

so the telephone calls, there are too
many, those things so difficult too,
all these difficulties
to work and work at, uneasily,
not managing, and you trying to help
in your way
your discouraging way

a labyrinth, but
it, my inattention,
bleary,
to float like this, get used
to doubt, you have, or
come to, nothing, say nothing
again, not touching, as with
a nerve end, for a liquid
to turn to ice when everybody
knows a question, which is not
a fabric

and I can't attribute, being
heavier now, bad intentions
to you because, as when sleep
comes, you're so totally
without intentions at all
and unable to use, not drifting
either, though known as cold
or flat words could come to
mean disarmed when it is
true of exclamation there's

your thin brief voice, the feelings
one could have about it, feelings
of strangeness, because of
how, in mineral shelves, before
a tender insinuation, and not wanting
to detour

it wouldn't be a push
toward land, as soaring on clipped wingtips,
land I don't try to reach by the
loaded dice, by the slow light, glacial
and am not surprised, in the
possessive case
that there's no land there
not for me
though I went at random and therefore
could not ever hope to stop

but inward, not being
able to decide or measure the
space I had given to you
a weakness that could appeal,
drift could do that, to weakness
and work was to be done
and with moist skin

your silence which, with
a question of punctuation seems to
repeat elsewhere, a long complicated life,
syllable by syllable, isn't
the slightest pause
what I wanted and therefore
that curving
to tell you

on the page, in the
wide open, you seemed
to pass through entire worlds though
steam would rise and I thought I
must by no means, in
even brighter light, or in
the present, let the thread
break

and so ask in turn, regardless of
kisses and dreams in color,
which winter? not with writing
going on, with the endless sentence
and a sandy feel to the skin and along
with it, not matching my all
thumbs to your thumb, and motes
of dust

thinking about it, variety of
large and empty, "our" winter
to break the energy, meant
already distance, excess of
air

and hoping to come closer,
like bringing it to
a single pore, was
howling up the wrong,
headed south for trouble,
hollow tree.

what had periods, of reflection,
to do with it, or commas,
or anyone's language.
Making me heavy, the long curving roads
a sense of sequence, which
even an old enough story
because I don't want to get anywhere
inward and awkward
becomes
a formidable power

of conjunctions, but what of
what shall we
do while we think
about it
for such a long
the street going on such a very
long time that
driving, not really
fast, but wanting to
take our distance, from
thinking
about it, which is not
a blind pause

not punctuation, but already rain
coming down, precipitate
taking your hand, or someone's
for fear that writing
though waiting for it, would
make me a shadow,
or from fatigue, worthy
of the dark.

JOHN GODFREY

NIGHT THING
EFF
AROUND THE WORLD

NIGHT THING

Nothing makes me remember you like falling from some missy. Conclusion: I should come off it. Uilleann pipes and outdoors the blackened moonless countryside. Tenderest growths all wrapped up in petals, modulation in the wind alley and tips crawling into space from trees make sweet high pig calls softly. I do not notice any giant golden chariot glowing over the mountain through the sky. I think I've seen enough to know it's drying up fast, and all the pianolas in the clouds won't make fruit while the vapor stays vapor. Only my heart begins to rave. My heart has laid across the stone and all it expects out of life is heat for caliente's sake. My heart will never be eager. And I see a high-price gypsy once a week for a reading, so there.

All this vague vanilla chatter. I don't care who you are, you're all wondering if you'll ever sleep the same way twice. That nagging voice says "Steady," and It's all I can do to flee with precision, under and around the unworn mudcaulks of the universe, for that's where I'm going, to the universe, and to the world. I will climb down from that tree in the dark, like monkey see, monkey do. And not to forget you, I fall in love.

EFF

I am walking across 9th Street and I'm whistling "Epistrophy" in perfect consecutive key changes. That's the kind of guy I am, the kind you don't take seriously. And I am right, it's all a big laugh. The wind that whistles not through my teeth but through leaves in the tree wells. Through my teeth go nothing but lies, and then my lips get chapped. It is necessary for me at such times to take better care of myself and to relax as much as possible, and so, I whistle. Faintly.

I imagine it's one in the afternoon, like now, and suddenly it gets very dark. Not from any rational or satisfying trauma. It's simply a mystery. Life seems suddenly not only short, but a shirt. I don't like it, right down to the buttons, and I know it's there, every moment, right under my chin. The cross has never worked against this particular werewolf.

Thank God I'm a free man! Did I say "God?" No, I said "free." I might have made a mistake there, but I always wait five minutes before I get all wound-up about blowing it. Someone, or everybody, doesn't notice the liberties I take, the glorious liberties.

AROUND THE WORLD

Well, Jack, I can't remember how old I was when I first learned about lullabies. Clothes were so thick in that place and fate was remote by the riverside. I'd fish around in my diapers, and chastisement seemed so mild compared with my sensations. I was destined for deep left field, I had no pay after the moment of consecration, I simply could not be distinguished from my sympathies. A look. A blur. It was inopportune yet fortuitous to follow such a street.

I said I no longer knelt, I would never again turn the picture face down on the grave marker. I would only behold flowers growing in moss. I would find them in trash so nutritious the smallest sidewalk grew over the storefront. Bounty without hunting, everything to share. I might even invite you to prepare the evening meal with me. My messenger and sidekick will be back from the jungle soon, and the living is easy.

See what you could have had? You must report every silhouette of buildings you see at midnight out of your window. You must revere their electricity. Never forget that in my dreams I am in the actual world, where I am interrupted by the greatest living tenor saxophonist.

Look, I know what you're wondering, but I also know firsthand why I'm *not* the devil. What a bit of moonlight can do to me is make up what abuses you. I argue with you until you too defend disgrace. I even begin to trust your musicians. I get them greedy, I get pregnant with fluorescent crowds. Hand to hand the platters of salad come closer over the non-descript masses. This is what can be done with eagerness. More collisions. More calliopes. You fit in the palm of my hand.

MICHAEL DAVIDSON

WORDS WITHOUT HISTORY
CONDITIONAL
THE SECOND CITY
PROSE OF THE FACT WORLD

WORDS WITHOUT HISTORY

I'm on the far shore looking back
what preceded is none of my concern
what lies ahead is someone else's idea

and despite the sign
What You Carry Can Be Replaced
Others Have Died In Its Creation

I don't mind carrying the load
the landscape is bound to be flat
never having been allowed to grow

never having wanted
not to be itself
and lacking connectives between be

and itself makes each journey shorter
than the last, no doubt to others
I appear flat as well

visible from the front
where they hang my name
but from the side

I am an "I" etched against black
almost invisible except for the quotes
that form a corolla around

the place where I must be, what I say
is no longer my own
but something that grew

from the voices of others
and came to resemble them
in my face

so that I carry them with me
in a flat world without smoke or cloud
or a thin rippling stream

that saying nothing
withholding nothing
goes on ahead

and I follow.

CONDITIONAL

Let's say I was sated. Would she seem less the case. Is she not all that is the case, the case the phrase can't do without. Let's say we could do without the phrase, would there be a case for being sated, not or otherwise. Would there be her to make the case and say what could not be said otherwise. Can she bear such conjecture not her own. What would being sated be as someone speaking, something said. Is there a mouth in which to say let's say I was sated. What hungers have no object outside of hunger what is hunger not herself. Turning her into you let's say I was not myself I was not myself. Take someone not sated, someone waiting for a door to open where a person might appear. Would such a person waiting recognize waiting as not being hunger. After being sated would there come a time to begin again. Is not being sated such a time all the time. Yet being ever before being sated has its allure, the clothes opening the fingers moving over her to unbecome myself. I wanted to say I was sated to afterwards know a certain thing turned back to her to verify and she also. Each time we verify a certain thing it feels like being sated. In the time of conjecture we repeat these things and they in turn in time return.

THE SECOND CITY

for C.S.

Even though there are motorized conveyances
I am on foot, even though there is a map
I negotiate the streets by landmark

there are no landmarks
but a series of edges
common to several cities

the hill is in San Francisco,
the great shopping district
with its glittering windows

and esplanade before the fountain
is in New York
and the river with its bridges is in Paris,

I'm working on the park
with its glass botanical gardens
marble pillars in the distance

leftover from the exposition
there is probably a hill
from which I descend

and arrive at the "market district" below
clearly indicated by the word "brick"
like those on the west side of Buffalo

to make this descent
is to negotiate the terrifying grid
of hill cities, roads

dead-ending against canyons, barriers
where a street careens into space
and continues below

bearing the same name
so that a second city rises
out of the forgotten one

more pointed because not yet filled-in
by monument or palisade
the place where water touches land

and forms a line
the leaflike veins of streets
it is too late

for the bus
and so I must walk from North Beach
to the Bronx or something with a 'B'

through the middle city
the place a middle occupies
when you are no longer familiar

and the buildings have only been seen
by night from a car
and by lights

I am afraid
someone will address me in French
and I will forget the word for myself

having so recently arrived
and yet to be a stranger
is to be swallowed up

without words where words
are paths between inside and not
building and street

in the second city
I live out the dream of the first
living neither for its access and glamor

nor dying from its disregard
simply talking towards the twin spires
of an ancient cathedral

like a person becoming like a person.

PROSE OF THE FACT WORLD

I place the entire forest, including the stars and automobiles and soft ice cream, in quotations in order to stand under the heavens and discern an archer in the southern hemisphere.

I have trouble getting the spacing right a peninsula juts into the bay the bay surrounds a body of land a blimp flies overhead taking pictures and I center the title in quotes.

He knows that if he found the beginning of the path he could follow it through the “burnished woods” to the fork where the shallow pond lies off to the left but they will have built a gas station in its place.

Across the spacious lawn leading from the foot of the buildings to the crystal palace, people were “splayed” about the landscape in variegated colors as in the *Grande Jatte* but with a decisive sense of motion towards him not in the original.

In so many cases a pass appeared, usually with a river on one side and great trees surrounding, that although attained by a difficult hike upwards was valuable only as a moment of transition and not for any destination below he read.

The beach is bordered at the south by a point, and the waves come at regular intervals, breaking slowly left and right. Surfers wearing brightly colored wetsuits are taking off, turning and cutting back. There are three primary movements to match the three primary colors.

There must be a room, an audience and a common language. I must be late, having forgotten my notes and the topic of my discussion. They will be distracted and quickly bored. It is difficult remembering the name of a book that I never wrote.

If we are to have sex, there must be persons who interrupt the act by walking through the room, sitting down at the coffee table and talking among themselves. One tries to be polite but they expect something quite different. You are not told what this is.

It is late afternoon and you are "downtown" and have to go to a restaurant on the "peninsula" where others will meet you, but the principle of the peninsula is to allow only a few to cross over from the mainland and the many jewelry shops and bookstores distract your attention so that whatever directions you were given have been lost along with your glasses.

What I can't remember in the other language I supplement with a series of barking sounds they seem to understand anyway, speaking as they do a foreign language.



RAY DiPALMA

FROM *TERRITORY*

the desperado
and his abacus
in utopia
 he plays
a white enamel
saxophone
and she
wears a dark
blue dress

eyes building a sun
a dog tied to the tongue

the consolations of winter
sustained by roots and the harmonies
of slowest change

lambent cycles for light
clenched by a sharp angle

making a new proportion
by jumping on the blood
like a nomad with his last word

intrepid menace tickles the arch
in the step by step

an energy that shoulders the empty
reminds the coherent in its lair
of no rainbow meridian

how laughter is found maimed by
the passivity that maintains its own discourse

remote unison
prismatic and
dissolving in
the grapple a
sense of sake
engaging calm
and a loss of
an equivalent
where the sum
gives contour
with thirteen
pulls to cull
a sonnet from
sparks of ink
Webster's tar

low light makes a landscape
out of distance

a poem is one of the almost successful
forces of nature

smacked around by repetition and
reflection

electric calendar and ancient alphabet
ferocious but hybrid specifications

ringing the changes on the mythology
of riff

point where the point runs to and back again
the rigors of function and novelty

passage mechanics shagging the circular
angle by angle one secret or the next

perfecting the transparent source
indolent strut dithering at the meridian

or just hammering at the window
a preserved disclosure something skeletal

fortuitous and taut

the account
big chemistry
for prosper

thorns dissolved
in ink and sweat
big chemistry

tells the account
for prosper
primitive tracing

first ritual
scorch naked and
separate on a dark wall

trusting the soot
of big chemistry
for prosper in

firelight that tempers
and coaxes first a
hand then a hot wing

traced in the fault
an account for the eyes
head first not

of words or ear
but brief lambent
ochre rays

dark prosper
big chemistry
ink tooth or horn

from account
to chronicle
and tract

a confused solution
emerges stranded
from the ceremony

a confused solution
puts a better light
on the overflow

a confused solution
shoulder to shoulder
shifting the charms

a confused solution
persists however
solemn the maxims

a confused solution
ripens the adage
an almost natural moment

a confused solution
threaded therefore
to therefore

a confused solution
figures into the gibbet
or signposts of a measured tone

a confused solution
the side-effects of fidelity
at odd moments

a confused solution
orchestrated and taut
registers an outline

a confused solution
floats like a compass
in oil like a compass

a light that builds forms
a light that dissolves them
the mechanical planet
intentions silver and ebony
sealed in a ball of ice
the big picture
everywhere and meantime
grief is pneumatic
ravers fill the aisles
stat stump notch
stat st-stat stat st-stat
product

DALLAS WIEBE

SKYBLUE'S ESSAY ON HALSTEAD, KANSAS

I, Skyblue, have made the great journey. I have made the great journey to the land of the dead and have returned to tell you all strange wonders that befell me. I have returned scarred but whole. I have returned to tell you that though the journey be fearful and fraught with many dangers you may go if you go with a clean heart and a courageous soul. You may go into and return from Halstead and be a new self because of the visions that await you on your journey and in the land of the great darkness.

There came a certain day in my life, as it must come to all mortals, when a strange voice spoke to me from afar. It was a mysterious voice that spoke over a dark channel and through a dark instrument. It said, "Come away today. The dark pilot is waiting and the great silver bird is quivering at the ready." I didn't disobey. I put my earthly goods into a bundle of trembling. I put a large gold coin into my mouth so that I could pay the dark pilot. I stepped out into the bright sun of the east, the great light from the land of creation, and set out on my journey over the hard path.

Huge, roaring machines attempted to crush me down in the path. I dodged and ran. They pursued me through a great steel web over a dark river. I cried out in despair. I chewed on my gold coin until my teeth cracked. I cried out for help as I ascended a narrow defile between massive walls of gray, layered stone. Roaring and wailing whirled about me from behind and ahead. Screaming souls raced by towards oblivion, red-faced and waving menacing fingers at my slow progress.

I thought my journey would end ere it had begun. Until as I fell to my knees in despair, a man in a blue uniform drove by in his blue conveyance with its bright silver wings and bright silver feathers, its dark body and its purring comfort. He stopped and stepped forth from the dark shell. He blasted some air through a silver device, he waved his arms and the evil spirits about me sullenly slowed and crept by. The dark spirit looked at me through glass shields, put his arm about my shoulder and said, "Follow me. I will lead you out of the valley and towards the great shadow towards which you journey. Be alert and brave. Follow the dictates of your pure heart and you will come to where we all must come."

I took the gold coin from my mouth, wiped off the slaver and offered it to the soft countenance. He held up his right palm and waved it away saying, "You must save it for the great silver bird." "May I pass by?" I asked. And he said, "You must first answer three riddles." "Riddles?" I said, "Three," he said. "The first is, 'If the spider lies in his web, who will know the truth?' " I said, "The moth who tests the solution." He said, "If the elephant were a camel, who would sound the last trumpet?" I said, "To cross the burning desert may also be a final message." He said, "If the roaring heavens descend to the plains, who will stand in their path?" I said, "The waters of our oblivion will run as our witness."

When my answers were completed, the blue man re-entered his conveyance and descended back down the dark declivity and disappeared into the rising fog of the early morning. I passed on along the hard road until I came to the entrance to a long dark tunnel. As I approached, large glass gates hissed and groaned and swung open. I entered and found myself in a maze of false entrances and exits. Strange cries whirled out from the lost souls. Huge engines of destruction ground around and

absorbed the wandering spirits. I walked forward. I walked upon a soft brown moss that covered the floor of the tunnel. Lost spirits raced by, carrying the burdens of their lifetimes.

I wandered through the labyrinth until I came to a dark figure. He stood by a small egg-shaped gate into another dark chamber. He was dressed in black raiment and had wings on his helmet and on his coat and on his sleeves. I handed him my beslavered gold coin and he silently signaled me into the dark chamber where dark spirits ran about. They spoke a mysterious language and handed about vials of strange liquids and gobbits of unearthly food. I looked about in the haze and saw that I was not alone. A multitude of dark visages hovered in the smoke and darkness. Many whispered or cried out their fears. They clutched each other in terror, gnawed on the gobbits and slobbered out the liquids. And waited.

The winged figure entered. Banging and cracking rushed around us. The great silver bird with the great silver wings roared out onto a rock pathway, lifted into the sky and carried us out of the morning sun of the east and into the darkness of the west. We passed huge billowing clouds. We crossed over great brown rivers below our journey. We looked down upon parched fields, leafless trees, roads that led only into each other. The landscape was empty of people. Cemeteries lay about in the gathering darkness.

Until the great silver bird became suddenly silent and we drifted down. After the roaring and bouncing, we gathered up our bundles and filed out of the great bird. The winged figure stood by the egg-shaped entrance. He did not speak. We stepped hesitantly out and found ourselves in a great empty, barren plain. Hot winds coursed across the dry land. Dust and ashes flew about our feet and into our eyes. I wandered about until I came to and entered a small dark carriage. It took me away, out into the barren land.

I traveled I know not where or how, but finally came to a crossroads. I did not know which way to journey. I looked about and saw an ancient cemetery with dark trees and stones with secret messages on them. A language never seen before seemed to try to speak to me. There was a yellow stone building at the crossroads and it was filled with bodies of the

long departed. Great fear came upon me until suddenly an ancient man sat beside me on a stone wall. He said, "The journey is long and fearful. Follow your true heart and you will go aright." I said, "My journey lies ever westward, but my heart says otherwise." He smiled, disappeared, and I turned south until I came to a sign that said "Halstead, Kansas." I walked across a small bridge over a small dark river and entered the land of the dead.

It was all new and strange to me. I let my footsteps take me wherever they might. Strange empty metal vehicles moved slowly through the streets. Empty buildings stared at my passing. A somber blue glow emanated from the curtainless windows. I came to and entered a building called "The Embers." Voices floated around me. "Looks like another hot one." "Sure does." "Where'd all these flies come from? Looks like I can get one with every cup." "Any sign of rain?" "Can't remember when it last rained here." "Been here long?" "Ever since I can remember." "Anybody seen Henry lately?" "Ain't seen him since he tried to cross back across the bridge. That was in the flood of '94." When I came out of The Embers, a small dark figure guided me to a small wooden cave where I lay down and rested in the whirring flies and the gnawing winds.

I awoke in absolute darkness and went out of the small wooden cave with its wooden door. I stumbled about in the darkness until I came to an empty white wooden building. I pushed my way through two huge wooden doors and found rows of wooden benches. There was a pulpit, an altar, a silent wind organ. At the front of the auditorium there was an oblong box. It had silver handles, silver attachments and a double lid. I opened the left lid. There lay a body with its hands folded across its chest. There was a gold wedding ring on the left hand of the dead body. I reached in and touched the icy hands. I pulled the shiny ring from the hand and looked up. Above me was a round window of colored glass. It was a many-colored picture. It was a picture of a kneeling figure. A bearded man knelt and prayed over a rock. His hands were folded and he looked to the heavens. I took the ring and ran out into the darkness and fled toward the bridge over the small dark river. Wailing and howling pursued me through the darkness.

Of my return journey I will not tell. How I escaped and came again to my regular domicile cannot be revealed. I will not speak of how my scars healed and my broken teeth were repaired. I will not speak of the strange dizziness that accompanies my every step along the byways and highways of my somber world. No longer do I laugh. No longer do I love. No longer do I write my deepest adumbrations. To set out on the great journey is easy. Each is invited sooner or later. To return is the great trial. I, Skyblue, have made the great journey and have returned to tell you that each must cross his own bridge when he comes to it.

FANNY HOWE

THE VINEYARD

To imitation England

Her owners brought her
Something like a transplanted hand
Of green fans grew in the vineyard
And she was there. Despair
Calculated she'd be home by never
When she was looking to locate
Heaven under a bell of seeds
She found her bird, they'd hung it there

By a bottle of fatigued blue flowers

And a black butterfly
One owner wondered which copy of two selves
Was better
Suited to a good harvest
A free self belonging to the whole world
Or a married one under the law
It was a bird who answered
Sitting recluse: woodsy: the hidden one

In skin as fresh as linen

A being quick

Among wind fern and spherical rocks

Was a child up

From the soles of her feet

Soon to be raised onto shoulders

Belonging to soldiers as neat

As bees if

Work, not life, is what you want to get over with

Red X, correction. Red check, yes.

Xero, xero, xero

Like so many bloodied lambs

Up in the air suffering

And sex continue

Some selves find freedom in counting

Others run away from numbers

Without a mind there's none of either

But copy, copy, copy

All night the rain

Pelts the big leaves
Kids are in peril skidding
In puddles cars turn over
The woods snap into parts of light
The city stays hard and high
Cone shapes predominate
In each landscape weights and shapes
Preserve the Father's name: Wrong One

When men wore overcoats down the stairs

They told their servants not to complain
Echo X was when your name was given
Echo A when your self cried help
All the others were like the ears
Of a female or native
Too sensitive to every sound
In the secluded vineyard
The real voice is inviolate

The self is a servant only

To its source
Even when the mustache of a Justice
Shades the Bill of Rights
And everybody means well
Like an elf and a giant
At the communion rail who show
Equality is not material
But X amount of soul

To me the disobedient

Servant sobs like a child
Self first
Her throat convulses
And sends down salt
Between the dreams of one night and the next
There is only her bent
Dark head, raised knee, white shirt and the chair
He sat in last night turned towards her

When home was a courthouse

With Platonic halls and people
White as candle grease
Sight's escape went to green
Leaves and the light on
The window fronting the field
Lengthened her posture
As a child rose to the one on his way
To the word, The Justice

Liberty for the few

Equality for the many
The criminal copies the oligarchy
Which is an international fold of moneys
The gulls of New England
Close their bills against the oil
Spills. At night pleasure rocks
In chairs and harbors
Wine colors contort on the goblets

Fog grays the skyline

An orgy of terror follows

The tired humans

Turn grape into wine

Their two-way grins

Wash up like a chance

To have faith in a giant when faith in the self

Has been lost. Twin appetites

Let no light in but refract it

One dreams of a land with vines

In purple or shadows on hills

Aren't pockets of mercy

In a world mostly stone

A constant elf—himself, herself—

Elevates song

To the day when birds will be angels

Again all senses precious

And light in the service of loneliness

The owners over the ocean sailed

From Mark to Karl and the angry
Gulls backed up into the sky
From nests among ankles
Of running selves. Some had never been
So free who had no ideology
But the ones with the goals
Ran after them crying
Kill them while they're still alive

Some selves are generous

Their faces face us
With ohs of vowels
Some selves sit at a distance
As if time had torn their feelings
From things forever. Some selves
Wake at four and some at seven
When certain selves act on their beliefs
They are given medication

Since tears become stones

Be fair to the small and raise each self
As high as it will go
Or things will be bigger than they
One day the help might become
The boss and earth let loose
Its silent members
Pebbles will roll over and insects
Pull on their gowns and boots

ENTER an owner full of genes

Who poisoned the children with same
Now a lover, hater or pioneer
In this continuing drama
About evolution or government
Self replicates self
Like a native versus an immigrant
Over who owns the vine
The imitation or original child



KEITH WALDROP

LIGHT: THREE PASSING EPISODES

for Ulrike Emigh

I

Late at night, having gotten in on the last bus from Boston, I am coming up the hill, a shopping bag of books suspended from each arm, ascending slowly. It is not painful—I am tired, but the air is dispelling my headache. Angell, just above the Meeting House, is dark and if you are climbing, car lights (it is one-way) seem to bear down on you.

It's steep.

I keep my eyes on the ground mostly, but glancing up I see, in the next block, still on the slope, a figure—blotted momentarily by a pair of cars racing down in parallel—that attracts my notice only because, just as I glance, it halts (with some recognition, I think, then dismiss the thought—too far away) and in the glare of a string of cars, disappears.

Another block, almost to the crest, I am slowing down, thinking of little but the easier plateau coming.

Whether I turn my head then because of the vague, but unresolved, memory of that fugitive silhouette, or because of naturally wayward attention, or if she has made some sound (I don't think so) I can't say. The door of the house is at ground level—unusual along here—and between door and sidewalk is a tiny white-washed patio, and just inside the half-open door, looking out at me, a young woman, stock still. Still, that is, until I turn, at which she says quickly, "Hello," and even as I return her greeting, is shutting the door.

I never actually stop, even while saying hello, and retain, already, no image of her at all. She would obviously not have spoken, had I not turned and noticed her.

II

Stimson Avenue is only a few blocks long, but in that short length manages to make a full right-angle turn and remain Stimson.

As I turn that corner, I see two girls, maybe five and four, or four and three (this is the middle of summer, but late in the afternoon) who give the impression of being between ideas—I mean, as if they have just finished some game and haven't figured what to play at next. Since they are standing on the sidewalk and don't seem about to move—though the older, at least, has certainly noticed me—I plot a course around them, through a line of grass between sidewalk and street.

Just as I veer off the walk, at a gentle angle, the older girl, with a look all the more mischievous for being almost neutral, reaches over quickly and with both hands raises the younger girl's skirt as high as it will go. I don't so much as slow down, but I see it all—white panties, chubby legs, a face filled with outrage—before a brusque movement restores conventional modesty. I try not to show how clearly I have registered either the fury that remains stiff and unspoken only because I am passing, or the cool triumph on the other face. But in fact I appreciate both, unaccustomed to gifts of violence and beauty.

III

The light is dazzling, with a burning glare, and I find—at this hour—almost no shade as I cross towards George Street. But there is suddenly in front of me (I am cutting through a parking lot) a tree whose foliage, immensely dark, forms a black, shaggy sphere, suspended, it seems, in the blinding noon.

Walking in under the leaves, shaded at last, I find them green, with only a hint of copper, edges of sun knifing through, flickering.

And then I come out again, on the other side, into the solid sunshine.

RON SILLIMAN

FROM *HIDDEN*

"Lucky"

The world is all (the word is all)
that is the case (is false).

The face grimaces, a forced grin
perfect as celebrity hair,

fresh shaved neck. Gone grey,
dead fronds form a collar

high on the palm tree's trunk.
Six sikhs seek some slick slacks.

Why do I write? An old man
now gone, half-Puerto Rican,

asks me that. God forbid, paisley's back.
Norms of the real (crushed bottlecap

in gutter, lollipop stick
denuded of candy, white, snapped

tip stained pink) present a chain
of associations we read as continuous

yielding life as a solid.
Lone runner along canyon path.

Abandoned gas station becomes
temporary pumpkin fest.

Long arcs of the park sprinklers
refract the sun. Dead pond smells

of human shit. The look she saw
on the driver's face, fighting

to regain control, before
his sports car rolled, hit

and broke his neck. Old surgeon's
slow gait across hospital campus.

Ribbed rim of a dime
shines in my coin purse

amid the darker pennies, thick
nickel, lit (just barely)

by the streetlamp. White leather tie
with bright red Japanese ideogram

logo (against the black shirt).
The question of details, the slope

of your cheek, a down so fine
it's not even visible

until close up, backlit by the sun
(curve of the lip or breast, bump

that shapes bridge of the nose).
Arm bent at elbow hoists a purse.

Earlobes stretched by decades
of heavy earrings, clips to gather

tufts of hair. Boxscore read
for Bach score. Bounce that way mudra.

Black cat with a silver bell
dangling about its neck

darts between houses,
its run a half-crouch.

So the moon is quiet as I am not.
The way the blind walk, their heads seldom turning.

Meat of the carrot a brighter orange
to have just been snapped. Liquid paper.

Carbon reaper. A man in a field
walks a small black dog. This is not

a description. The small table
in the kitchen corner where a man sits

staring into his coffee. Bras exist
(body as site of the state)

as a form of bondage, heels spiked
not to add height but to tighten

calves. Locked ward. Locked word.
Hill half-hidden in fog, neither

speech nor song. Old Khaki-colored
canvas covered truck. The point is not

to yield poetry safe for millions
fresh from tv. Emotion

is the opiate of (drugged
against more critical

sensation). . . . My thumb
instead of a nation.

“Newborn girl gives birth
to twin brother.” That splendor

can be made to cohere
with enough ovens. Old hotel

vacated by fire, refurbished
for gracious downtown living

upscale studio condo. Doves against fog,
the range of gray. Navy blue sky.

Man in a grey suit with bright red shoes
dances in silence, Walkman headphones on

waiting for the light to change.
It never does. That code's opaque

to the color-blind (was invented
1905). The streets in Europe

too thin for cars. Gloves demand a sacrifice
poor. old. tired. cow. *Miami Vice*

demonstrates the difference
between narrative and plot. Cannot shut

revolving door. Town in which they jog
in thick sweatsuits. Lath and plaster

is not my master. Nor is this
a linebreak. Mandarin canon

false ideal. Don't you wish
you invented Velcro?

Blurred ink and tiny print
of evangelical tracts.

Sun's light dimmed by a scrim
of high clouds. Large dark ships

on the bay (words) surrounded
by the small white sails

of pleasure craft (punctuation).
Time is real as tense is not.

BRIAN SCHORN

FROM *THE LOGIC OF SENSATION*

UMBILICUS OF DARWIN

Chordata: 1

Look at us
hang like gravity
hang like simple tools
 over the blasting furnace of our own
invention
 Our bone-filled bodies now completely upright
Communicating
food & sex
& hanging like necks of a bitter fossil
Just hanging while our tongues rot
 Velvet
 O brain of civilization

Look at us
 in bed
 Our Djetis bed
Fertile & farming up placenta swelling slush again
Fetus upon fetus
 flung out like the semen of Darwin

We
Our head of hormones
hung by the fallacy of your umbilicus
 O Darwin the origin of your umbilicus

PENTAGONAL PILLOW

Echinodermata: 2

Let me pack you
 your mechanism
with fear-like fetish granules
all the way through until you vomit
 until you perform
like some fountain squirting bladder mix
(Frothing Mucous Saliva)

You: Dehydrated

You: Buried

I tell you

 You buried yourself like brittle stars
Every calcareous rod of your body
 Snapped!

 I creep into you like salts

O MADNESS!

Lay your face

Dig your face

Lay face down on that pentagonal pillow
& watch your own fascination come true

I can do this

SUICIDE OF PERSEUS

Colenterata: 8

everything I represent is here
under gelatinous umbrella coast of Corfu
already a self-clubbing-shaped continuous scar
not encrusted enough salt to ever communicate
with the testicles of Zeus
I make myself communicate
 how to swallow the
 death of Hermes
 death of Athena
spit out my own image
on the mirror swimming bell bag of simplification
& whorl & dissect
& describe my tentacle hanging head as a bud of
Medusa

NEPTUNE'S CUP

Porifera: 9

Cock this unconscious solar flare
already made from the carbonate of lime

spatter

pores opening and opening radio static pore poems
head dam open
one huge gaping arm dam open

like the reversing function of a sponge

given fresh-
water fixed spasm body canal
a million years
over penetrating the lips of Neptune's Cup

THE MAKING OF DE SADE

Protozoa: 10

incapable of anymore infantile locomotion

 We smell

the canyon of our bodies becoming visible
only for enough time to see ourselves fused
at the stomach
being ignored into the cortex of single-celled

 Pleasure!

canyon's flagellation greedy tide
sucks in more particles of the Marquis de Sade
sucks in us
comes out of us
everywhere a third pair of pseudo-pods
the making of de Sade

 His trumpet-

like body heaving object
whip his distinct anal aperture
just enough to flip us over as one nuclei of attention
just enough to flip us over in our own digestion

JOSEPH SIMAS

FROM *THE LONGER SENTIMENTS OF MIDDLE*

(PART I)

I just wanted to start somewhere and move from that point out and back again, adding lines to the back of sentences. Or at least I thought I could come back around to middle, a center, and count on it to be there in the swirling mass. I do not want to be the center, but from some center move out and qualify each initial step. I was in the middle of a letter pleading with her sister to let me marry her. Notebooks are familiar too; shelves fill up over the year with forgotten stories, bad lines, coffee stains across the front of my shirt. I still remember her thighs, the way particulars obsess and furnish; the force of the exterior landscape is dull under silk.

There must be something between my excesses that would describe these efforts to break out. I learned some of them in school. Still, to this day, I try to find that point of calm in excess at the junction of passionate violence and sheer indifference that condition our notions of belief. I am willing, and relieved.

Older stories were dragged along by destiny's forgotten leg, in the middle. There is an urge to believe; while another looks at a chair and says, "Discuss!" I am lost in differences between myself, make-believe chairs, and others related to childhood. I never had them, and have forgotten all but her, him, that other, whichever discrete person I am.

I tend to throw things *at* the wall just missing my pretend object. There is an order to what we said before I got there. I wanted to get off the quotidian subjects and into the subjective nature of what I knew about her at a distance, which was really wanting her between me. I wanted to call up the power I had over her to make her believe in what existed between us at odds. The letter was an intermediary to which we would often refer as provisional device. If desire was visceral, there was also something painfully real to the sentiments we did nothing but talk about during the embattled scenes.

I was becoming hotter and stuck up. I could feel that I made her want to fuck me from behind. She wanted someone to fuck who made her want me as I did. At a certain point it becomes more difficult to turn back than to go on through otherwise impossible steps. This is where I want to stop and look around for others. Yes, I want that power over him against the sink. I love the sweat, the smell of his cock, the moistened warmth of his body against my skin, while someone is watching from a distance. I want him to see the length of his stiff sex slowly entering my cunt in the crescent of volumes. I want him to watch as he licks the sweat off my thighs under the sweet mass. I want to feel the surface of his skin coming off under my nails as the angles bend.

Don't you see what I hopelessly reject in purple sequels. The people honestly scrape through the mirror at what is impossible to understand. Destiny is brittle at an impasse of belief. This is not the way she saw it the first time, though it remains unchanged by others. I can't get back over to middle without riding through; others wait as the lights change.

I admire him in a kind of sullen forgetfulness. I mean I like to watch him when he is with other people, the way he moves, what he talks about, how people listen to him when it is obvious. When he touches me I can feel it, my whole body, all of it, and I want him to understand for how will a fool ever supply my gender. For the first time in years I feel deeply and sexually attracted to a man who has nothing but warm and maternal thoughts for me during my first period of lustful self-effacement. I've talked to him, but you can't force it, it just won't come like that, the body controls its own members. Now I feel like a fool, and need, badly, in order to satisfy my lust. But what can I do up against a wall? Vanish?

I don't know how to get back, or on with it, but accumulate. She has nothing to do with stalling the story—I have lived enough, and know no other way of telling. Often doubt enters because of a certainty of what not to do following previous sentences. I don't want to talk to myself, events that make up my life, any more than necessary—anyone else will do for a change. But I have not learned to do this right and consequently often doubt the wrong things. It is not a matter of struggle or pain, victory or pleasure, nor is it “nothing” drives me; I am not driven; there is this

opening, now go there and come back before it is too late. If there were no other stories then what was I to do, but go on, and find a time.

If he had known her after, when she was no longer alone, what then the accumulation of events and dead matter that led him to where she was in the middle of the earlier story. The third person intervenes quietly and dies. Let us admit that the individual life makes a difference to third persons. And that language is also a product of this and fashioned between the spiraling mass of errors in address. That if I were alone I might choose to write in a particular manner that is in some way independent of the manner in which language has chosen me to be apart of its overwhelming fabric. In other words, language does not control the means of production I thwart against.

But I do want this to work by analogous means to the letter. It should function in the way ploughed rows of a field function before planting. I imagine a different farmer for every row planting different trees for different nights.

Staff sounds violent to me from him. Even the smallest group tends toward polarities among interrelated quirks. This break is filled with noise.

I could return to certainty in order to create a middle no one would understand. Some readers will simply not accept an error in the process of composition they are unaccustomed to. A little each day some example for turning round. There are precedents in turning. A work of art should plough a furrow into the eyes of startled social models.

The idea is starting early in its turn, and turns. The idea of a work ethic includes years of giving labor to functions beyond personal means of appropriation. There is much not to understand in the dull and wild alike. Some of them will value labor in the sense of movement making her appear in the act of substantiating only under appropriate means. Before this there is no idea to suckle under.

Prior to this there is no labor and no idea without. Nothing can be done for its own sake simply then spit into the wind. There is nor ought to be. It can change out there hovering above the surrounds, as in it is raining in azure skies at twilight. Nothing is certainly a potential in faltering. Some

believe it substantiated as soon as the work begins who make it also that much easier to end knowingly. In some positions I am always waiting for somewhere else. Others play while waiting but this does not alter the function of what it is to begin alone.

So I place an end, a goal, way out there not to get the idea that I can make the act appear as happily as I please and somewhat distasteful. I tend to choose numbers as having no especial relationship to whatever I might choose to begin with or what has chosen me. Length and duration ultimately derive from the details though there is importance in the notion of a fixed time or place at certain intervals. Much of this particular work is waiting; however, because I have decided to work between certain periods accepted as conventional to the formation of an idea and am incapable. My arguments are deficient from the beginning. There is a song I like in the heated exchange.

The dream factor seeps into the notion of a plush rose. The line shrinks and grows at opposite ends. The parallel rows mirror each other at the neverending vanishing point. They will never quite meet, but in their separate developments will arrive together in the discourse of the everlasting. The infinitesimal affronts the infinite.

In the dream my father starts becoming younger by the day. Those around him suggest he is ill yet there are no medical signs of malady. I live a great distance from him and know that each day I am not in his presence he is becoming younger and younger. I am anxious to get to where he is before the point comes when I will no longer recognize him as he was. A mental image of him occupies my mind. It is nearly impossible to find a plane ticket. Finally I am able to board a plane. What can I do with a father younger than myself? Will he recognize me? Who will I have become to him? Should I teach him to be a man? Will he run away from home?

Seasonal changes occur abruptly and without warning. There is no one thing to count on absolutely, though my lack of specifiable and factual knowledge bothers me enough that I know there is always something occurring differently from how I happen to imagine it. Some of the earlier morning turning fails to wake up. The text itself is, in a certain sense, a

single point of view. I realize as I am writing this that it is heresy to admit such secular disturbance. Concurrently, I believe gender is not the dominant definitional mode. Nor is genre necessarily any more of a prison than the text itself is a prison. I admit that compounding single points of view can be terribly dull and innocuous. But this can also be the concentration of a singularly displaced mind and body into a forceful construct not really that easy to pigeonhole no matter how much one resents it. There is something eloquent in this kind of concentration. I have an occasional need for a slap in the face.

This is where I am personally touched. The line from the beginning stumbles through various feelings of indefinite definitions of someone like myself in such a world. It is a limp that characterizes my favorite person's walk. You can see him stuttering to the birds in a grove of trees rich with wealth. The clumsiness affords the sheer pleasure of disbelief and surprise. There are, of course, different lines drawn for different purposes. He could stop here. He's the nervous little character out there trembling behind the large steel door.

The cleaner lines are apparently much more beautiful closed. They come together well, and nicely, come together to sit and drink for awhile at the neighborhood bar and go home. There is this virtue in the geometrical; someone out there really must feel great. Neatness is in order.

But behind the line there are stacks of orders, each written in a different hand, spoken by a different voice. The point when the two lines ought to meet is when they diverge and there is that other splendor in the excitement of not knowing exactly which line one will meet at any given time. Refusal is not stronger because negative; the choice to go ahead and listen to someone else is often a stranger complex than fearing the untold.

The border was broken and I proceeded to hear other voices than what I had previously been told. The middle of the figure had been unbound and retied; how could I already hate the sound of those who had never before shown themselves to me as they were? She made no prefaces. He told me I could not expect to go home.

We went to a film. The conversation turned around how such things

would have been different had films followed this mode. How ideas furnish and obsess sometimes lesser minds including our own. The words here come to and from the film. Would it have been any different somewhere else? The scene on the steps lost its visual intensity in order to express the relentlessness of the governing party's drive. The masses were literally descended upon. She became more and more attractive throughout the discussion because there was no worry about whether or not our talking would survive. I might have used former tactics. There is a moment of doubt intrinsic to all humanity. She lingers naturally around our shared address.

We had to go back to the store of images. Those to whom the identification grows into perception. There is nothing more I need to own. The economy was simply that each gesture worked. This is one qualitative measure. We did agree that they worked for separate reasons within what could also be perceived as a whole. The argument excluded the option of an individual hero, though the hero was one. I guess I have the sense that no matter what I say can be saved if necessary, which conditions the way I speak, and must be an aspect of language that particularly obsesses me. I don't want to fear what I have to say before I say it, though she is quick who tells me to watch my mouth, for words of no credence have escaped you. She has to believe in something if only for a minute, and then some, onward to the next.

I have not mentioned love. It is all provisional, returns to some object of desire sleeping across the hall never quite near enough. Breath, like style, changes accordingly the context moves in and out of someone's, someone's like my own, returns enough to grasp. She turns around some, a little more each day for such refusing. I try to hold on and explain.

Rules indicate the beginning of meaningful play. The pre-established middle is near at hand. The recognition of numbers may be helpful.

I want you to walk the dotted line with me. Fill out the picture, open your heart to the hearth of an image created here, then left for memory to squander in the absence of a word. The lines are unequally ploughed. There is no suitable machine for memory, no other way to get the words back than to let them go on, to fill up the space between here and eternity.

I slip into outdated modes, hold on, move back, pick out, call your name. The sky is stuck to early morning blinders I stare at hopefully.

Tell them to leave you alone. Take off and run across open fields, the weight of your hair tracing the trail of light as it defines your swiftly moving contour. Let them come after you. Take off! Drown them in the glare of light thrown from your shoulder! Blind them with the brilliance of your forgotten eyes! Blame them who wish to hold you back in the selfish mud of wormy existence! Revolt! and give them the sign!

Our history is lost in the archives. The sequence is made up differently each time. The nerve impulse functions across longer and longer gaps. The electrical pulsation is not enough. The movement never achieves much more than this and is made from the omissions and errors I have led myself to believe in. They come from farther back and hold on behind the wall I have put up to fend them off. The fragility of our lives is deceptive and in their fabric a denial seems to wind its way around the middle we refuse to accept and misunderstand.

There is no end to the numbers of composition. So many of them can go any which way forever. They mean and do not mean. Somewhere the movement and color is lost in the judgment of what can be perceived according to convention specified by the few who define the powers of acceptance and past. I enjoy the way we can sit and talk forever gliding in and out of subjects making something other than what either of us expects. I am also lost in the distraction of my surroundings as your tone of voice soothes the harder corners of our difference. I am held in the longer sentiments of what is not between us but in the middle of surrounds we do judge or expect, distance as it warms the physical contours of our separateness in being one.

A little more each day only this rose for turning. References to recently forgotten pasts. I have forgotten what I was unsaying yesterday in the space of this letter. For what I say often never reaches it in words. I often get caught up in what I have to say, but I can't go on forever. No, I guess I am not alone, but who then am I with?

The pastoral lyric is a lovely retreat. I could tell him, as a woman, what I thought of her, how her skirt brought my attention to her knees. The

wheat fields reminded us of the larger texture. No matter how hard I try to forget my voice remains my own. Which also reminds me how often I wander off despite my principles. If I refuse others it is rarely because of my obstinate nature and I inevitably turn back to confront them, in the logic of denials. These are images I hold on to and must admit. I enjoy the sight of a waterfall, a forest of trees, a mass of people.

Singulars are engulfed in the middle. Down there, in between, way off, the forest retains. I have a hard time getting started, though I can see the line starting at the tip of my nose and leading off in both directions forever. I am a social product, but I nevertheless want to refuse the tendency toward domination and forceful statement our use of speech expects.

In fact it is a language without an other who can hardly expect. The language is green, a forest, a juvenile delinquent, a singular mass whose manners are hard to predict. It is red, blood flow, injured eyes, a physical monstrosity up close. It is blue, the sky, a weather, the predicate of inescapable elements. It is yellow, light, scatters, a blanket of deception and unlikely transparencies. It is black, white, gray. It is black and white and gray.

As far as I can see there are no sides. What is science without prediction? History? Even if circularity is imposed does not mean it will always come back. Does not mean more for each turning. Mean more for roundness. More roundness does not always satisfy. This is part of what I mean by wanting to come back. I will be a stranger there. I will become my own neighbor. My neighbors will look at me from the distance I have left behind. Why when in the face of inexplicable powers do we persevere to inflict and impose wills that go against the grain of all better wishes. Why is not the violence of contact enough to satisfy our discontentedness other than the fact that it is hard to accept defeat without the cherished idea of future reprisal.

There is precedence. I am wrestling with the ungainly syntax of a sentence I do not understand. Most of the statements are obvious. It doesn't really matter how many words you know, but how you know you are used by the words you know. I had a maniacal father who knew the

proper names of almost all things. Consequently, I soon grew tired of endless discrimination between everything physical and began searching for words I never learned that could explain relations between. I learned to distrust essences.

You see what I mean about people. I suppose we can adapt to just about any image of ourselves, though it is lovely to think that our fragility can never be hidden. The sheer beauty of economy is still a pebble in the shoe, and those who believe otherwise are usually barefooted. Even they will encounter a shard of glass along the way, a sharp rock, cold water. I tend to group things in threes or fives because I live in the city. This is where I began to appreciate the ones who run around to get lost in the crowd, the ones who talk forever without anything in particular to say as such. I get the feeling that these are the ones who are hurt by everything, who feel the pressure in the air, who dread the sky crashing down upon them. I am not attempting to prescribe anything. Irrevocable habits are dogma. I love the beauty of sheer economy but deep down I hate everything that is well-wrought and fashioned in the smug belief of perfection. I am thrilled by a compelling argument, and have often lost myself in the simple lines from a master's hand. I too have been convincing. There is no one mode, but attitudes. What is extremely limited and has no end.

So on with the story. And so on. I was allowed to marry her. The lovely thing about bureaucracy is mismanagement. Even after the ring we went around looking together for the virgin. I have thought about meeting death around the next corner and turn some just to get around the larger menace of the wall my back is up against. I have looked for hours through the mirrors of someone else myself.

I need to come out from under this deep sleep. There is another whom I recognize, his name on the letterbox, his back on the floor. It has been proven that all numbers are divisions of one. Or that all causes are effects deriving from other causes which ultimately lead back to one. Once the perception has been made comprehension comes easily. I like to make sense of it all by saying to myself and others that it all must go on. Being is ultimately vague and inarticulate. Thank God is inarticulate. Perhaps this

is why he writes that language is an expedient because it must go on in order to exist. But I have learnt to appreciate those who go on without a predetermined goal knowing as they must that an end will come despite themselves.

Socially, I am inclined to admit that the inner force lies deep within each one of us. I also appreciate the existence of values dividing people into categories that are hard to resist. Justice is the vain attempt to return to the subject of one. So then we invent two to swallow the impossibility. And so on going on.

He reaches for perversity at the habit's end. He or she could be anyone with a sense of morality and degradation. The mirror breaks off the body, into the space of division. I am without end and bounded to this belief. Habits are achieved with the lights on. He evaded her eyes. She felt the sympathy of someone broken, fraught with certain ends, stained by delays of cultural habit. If there is nothing to reach for why go on? Why, really, does the emptiness seem to grow, to suck up what is left of previous dilemma?

This is an historical approach. Experience is divided equally among the stories we make up about ourselves. The mirror divides, and yet through its reflection he or she can see the pity in the eyes of its beholder. This posturing through self-abnegation is the habit's end. It is this necessary hesitation. What lies on the other side of a huge body of self-defeat?

Where does this matter come in? There is nothing left to move, but in moving. Is there a systematic charge? That was the time she felt the violence within and could not resist. How do I know if the angle is correct? She changed places.

The two who met at the corner could not understand the force of accumulation drives were working beneath. The recognition of someone known who over the space of an undetermined time has become one and so completely another. The words could not begin to replace the silence upon contact. Emotion is suspended in another place of somewhere else. I could not begin to describe the swirling mass. There again was this movement, left toward the beginning of another line, direction travels every which way. The desperation in their look was only so to an

observer, yet the pain is real. How to survive at that moment of recapturing?

Other events and stories could be, will, must be, banal. This is part of the overwhelming nature of the ordinary events, even when heightened in the elaborate structures of disbelief.

That was where they ended up. The walk along the river on such a precious day seemed fitting to accept their relationship as it stood. There was time to go on, time to imagine another battle in which neither would win or survive, or carry on. The row of plane trees continued along the river's border and this is what they wanted to offend. I can't get the other out of it any more than there is a natural possibility of symmetry to such a high degree of sophistication. I can't believe in this prison.

There are the rules. There is a concept of organization pending the capacity of other limits. Sequels offer no salutary rewards. Praise does not apply.

It takes time to get started. The acts of refusal are numerous throughout each cause. This is where I wanted to feel differently. I knew him before the incident took place and had a certain image of how things might get done. The movements are larger and less qualifiable in the end. But then how does one get back to the beginning and go on again and again. This is not what happened. Some of the accumulation buries if even for the existence of another cause. Or another cause lengthens because of a mistake.

There are days when I want to dress differently, assume another identity outside of the reaches that have been described for me. This reach is often accompanied by guilt or difference, outrage or disbelief. I would like my breasts to show, or stop someone I do not know in the street. And yet it seems like most of the choices are coopted, and only in perversity can one find a significant personal difference that shocks. I can't want to do such a thing for fear of the pain I might cause others close to me.

Evasion has become a viable dogma, certain forms of which seem necessary if only to bring the message home. I do not want to belong to a state defined by the documents that undoubtedly include a fragment of who I am under certain circumstances. I think enough differences exist as

it is without making such an exaggeration of them, if only they would turn around for a moment and stare at someone else.

The morning shadows concede specific conclusions. There are other ways to begin, to carry on, to end and go on again. I am left with no certain sense of failure or success; nothing is ultimately defined by the excess. But I can see first one person, then the next, falling into line there, near where the outline of the shadows obscures the light, and I am one of them, it seems, though I can't be certain, and in this distance, there is no mystery to behold, nothing, finally, to scoff at, nothing simply to hold on to or possess; I have and shall have nothing, and we are not alone in all of this.



GEORGE TYSH

FROM *PROPOSITIONS*

PROPOSITION

The hard-on will be any length desired.

AIRE

Supposing a globe of black wavers as the room breathes cylinders of attention which rise—our guests also rise in their travels on hands powered by unknown balloons. Unloading crates of vocal water, the tomtom elevators in the background lift. Supposing a neckline in touch with an element of desire penetrates the cloud on a postage stamp. Rain on the scene hissing slowly could breathe in hallways. Floor above floor, room to room, the geyser pours out a voice in childlike doses of continuity: “your shoes, your lips, your waist,” etc.

BABES

There are pinholes in the social fabric through which we see their glass figurines. White hearts, white as living with slow access to boundless green, who remember countries hardly there. A somnambulist interferes at the summit of white around us, the spinning halos and whirling rings of the act. Like a four-sided corner in the brain, prodded by spikes, dabbed by thighs. We turn up the treble and tune in plexiglass wafers of celestial lunch, pink asteroids that click in diamond heels. The voice that wakes is them in high C, piercing the stillness in nylons, unfolding a couch of hand-held dreams, the hide-a-bed of night where we wait.

CRIMES OF CHARM

Everything was alright after he took them both to bed, two play figures of the younger generation. By including legs, stockings, high heel shoes, the telephone and roses with a note card, it became an introspective mystery of layers and what they enclosed. Between them the sheer abduction wrapped his cock in a black spot upon leisure: black-bound novel of ankles and wrists, spaces of black that pass the gate of a projector, each thought framed in blackness. To paraphrase Reich, "you may be able to love two women, but it's not possible to be faithful to either." The clues are lost, bowing to the idols of a malignant birthright, cunts and cock of beauty and overconfidence.

ENEMA

There must be nothing left but a kind of glove.

FAITH

I asked myself "how could I sodomize
your text?" so as to complete the art
of the perverse, "how could you urinate
in the leading?" as if double-spaces
gave you the room you'd need to fill
a mind's mouth, there were moments when
your ears no longer heard the language
and your fingernails lifted any cock
to write with (the hot sperm edition of
my collected works stuck in your hair,
staining the cashmere choker, a gift)
we could never find enough ways to take
in the private parts of a sentence,
to incorporate a once-only image of you
bound in the silk parody of your clothes
a thrall to our merciless love of words.

DANCING WITH WOMEN

more than many
dancers
more than a few
choreographers know

the awful turbulence
of living with secrets
things swirl around

in the dust
in the hindsight of structures
in the middle at
print level
standing with men

the light comes back
to windows
to decorate
the blue of heat in water

in tundra thru slots
in paintings with veils
in a tea lounge
with leg-room

dancing with women

EVERYDAY LIFE

Passion in general
is conceived as a *singular*
obsession, directed towards one,
and only one, object.

Even in this narrow
definition it is frustrated
and its *elan*
diverted into the phoney

compensations of the spectacle.
La Rochefoucauld
once observed: "Often,
what prevents us

devoting ourselves
exclusively to any one
vice is the fact
that we have several

others." An extremely
constructive statement
if its moral
presuppositions are rejected

and it is stood back on
its feet
as the basis of a
programme

for the full realization
of human capacities.

AFTER-IMAGE

There were no moments left without sperm. Stockings tighten the garter of her neck. Washed they smell that another might suck them for it. In the faucet the soprano sings a man's mouth. Contorted sheathed uneven black, as if space would cue and fill this person.

In the mouths of the Detroit lovers a bowl of a fountain raised to drink her indelible fluid. Inert prick laying eggs, so a queen of nylons ties one across the neck and finds her heels for a blow job. There's young nothing eyes wrung resolve throat learning an orifice.

Emasculated muscular arms affecting unpaid labor as it flourishes, shaved armpits growing slowly planting a nearly headless need to consume her nape and neck and ears, she throws the best segments of an awareness into deviance, isolating a real "her" from the surrounding "life."

MARGARET JOHNSON

BIRDS IN WINTER

We have a great fondness for the birds
who are around in the winter
because they, like us, are around
in the winter.

We cannot begin. No one starts us.
We are lost.

When the birds come, they are expecting
something. Dangling from branches,
an urgent call. Some form of departure.
We can't see them or identify them.

When the fire horn is quiet the night is
quiet. A woman is making a sweater
for herself during rehearsal, not for her
son or husband. We have come in but
it is too late and we all stand to be
berated. Having failed the music. The
composer is restless in his bed.

How shall I amend my life he says
not in grief but in wonder.

After the war he has not divided the spoils
but sits and looks at them. It cannot be
that what we say will make the words true.
The music creeps in, making a
mood. For so little has he imperilled
his soul and lost what was loved.

You cannot go I decide. But I speak
clumsily and your attention wanders
just at the wrong time.

Cats clean themselves in windows. A
man walks down the street, falls
and gets up again. An acquaintance
offers to drive him home. He declines
then accepts. I have a bloody washrag
in my hand.

They fear thwarting. They fear failure.
On the cool clear night we watched
falling stars which were not spectacular
but remarkable. We said as much to
my brother in law but he said I
watched and didn't see anything
untoward.

Who has made you transcend. He seizes
him by the lapels, who. This is a curious
prison he thinks as his feet knock about
beneath him.

We were not troubled by the problems of
the city but sat at home. It was cool,
there was a breeze and intermittent
clouds. All of the words of description have
become aligned, a failure of invention.
She thought hard, knitting at the rehearsal.

There is a place where one may be replaced.
It was not age telling. All those who sang
in harmony agreed. Then saddened they
withdrew. I she mused would follow
you anywhere.

That's an idea. The piano player practices
repeatedly and perceives some slight
improvement. He says that voice is wimpy
and curls up at the foot of the step. Maybe
a change of seasons later, maybe not.

Finally one comes from a car to observe it.
There are not herons here in these words
after all. A picnic lunch must be packed
up, cars exerted to depart. The new location
must be overturned.

Stopping on the marsh shore, we deduce this
among the spindly purple flowers which grow here.
The campers reach out of sight but we might
behold them later. For now it will suffice to
fish in the quiet, as a friend has described
to us.

He is not lonely in small streams in woods
behind suburbs. But is sad in practice
rooms, wishing for another to share the music.

At a corner table old loves lean their heads
near each other. They would have liked a
more informal life.

MARCEL COHEN

FROM *HOSTINATO RIGORE*

translated from the French by Rachel Stella

A child miming his death, motionless on the ground, eyes closed, arms outspread like the Christ (he cannot yet imagine that one might die otherwise) with the hope that they will feel sorry for him, and let all the love he deserves burst forth. He is hailed with a mere: "Stop playing your idiotic games and go wash your hands for dinner!"

A painter seated by the bed where lies his dead father and trying piously to catch, one last time, the likeness in a drawing. As he works, he comes up against the observation that John Berger made under the same circumstances: nothing differentiates what he draws on the paper from what he might draw were his father only asleep. Who, though, faced with the finished drawing, would not see the distinction.

In his room, a child avenges himself for a harassment by pulling up fifteen centimeters of wallpaper above the plinth; then, having decided this retribution was insufficient, empties half of the contents of his fountain pen on the carpet.

Insistant dialogues between a pair of tightrope artists questioning each other, during moments of intimacy, to determine whether it is possible, without taking disproportionate risks, and in what position, to make love, without a net, twelve meters from the ground.

Description of the possible misshaps which could befall a child who, looking for an uncontestable good luck sign, has given himself the goal of skipping one-footed on thirty consecutive paving stones without either omitting one or overstepping its bounds, but who misses on the twenty-eighth.

A writer is temporarily impeded from committing suicide, because, while putting order in his files, the few unpublished pieces he runs across seem, suddenly, to have enormous potential for improvement.

Variation—more dramatic—after Vassilis Alexis' film "I Am Tired": a man is about to commit suicide, sits down at his desk, writes a letter of explanation to his wife and then calmly rereads it. He is on the verge of sealing the envelope when he feels the need to verify the spelling of a few words with the dictionary. But the dictionary is not in its usual place, and remains impossible to locate.

The scene is repeated day after day: in the public park, the child runs after the pigeons; he runs faster and faster, stretches out his arms, ends up tripping, and falls. If he bursts into tears, the response is never really the expression of the pain—though it is real enough—rather of rage: he only wanted to hug the birds, he tries to explain.

In Paris, the whole day long, a man is inextricably prey to the memory of a woman he thought he'd forgotten. It started with her first name, cried out by a child who could have been hers, and his; then a silhouette of a confounding resemblance, a fabric in a print she often wore, her brand of perfume in a shop window, her smell in the street, her voice in the metro.

Their last conversation surfaced in its turn, word by word; and by and by the precise atmosphere which had brought about their rupture. The man could see nothing to add, nothing to take back: a truly ineluctable disintegration. Nonetheless, the tightness which still remained in his heart could be discerned with precision; and it was that which then, as now, linked them. As if in the unfurling of the rupture, and despite the avatars of their passion, a lone match remained, intact, in the midst of the bonfire.

CHARLES NORTH

BUILDING SIXTEENS

The building is doughnut-colored light
and the colored light behind,
carved shadows included,
is littered with donuts.

 Good spelling doesn't
 get you very far
 in life; nor (counting
 the number of buildings
 which have so far landed)
 are there *genuine imperatives*
 to go with the structural
 side, the grosser qualities
of things, the ones that settle on
people doing their shopping for them,
planning ornate purposes that glimmer
and delineate before they fade

as any country's list of principal products
tells a lot about its ways of
thinking about itself and others,
the world of pig-farming humpbacked
 on a horizon on the
 verge of accounting
 to no one, like a blood
 orange teaching its lesson
 to all the other colors,
 particularly at sunset.
 Whence it appears that
 at least since Victorian times,
a troublesome arch has enveloped
people, buildings and landscape
in a fuzzy notion of what it means
to be central, and the stars like brainwaves

fight through the illusion that we are
command modules illuminated by
some extremely distant source
which gives out, along with throwing
 down its spears, the
 scale which might then be
 noticed and lived in.
 I.e. shooting stars into
 the very idea for the place.
 Just between sentries
 it's cooler, as who would
 burst in oddly continuous
with normal life melting back to
its plinths, brought to the boil
like chicken soup more spun against
than spinning. It isn't after all

in growing like an apartment building
by cantilevering that humans see
out over their limitations, but a
combination of unrest and purest
 sight, the keenest
 the first to gust as per the day
 and its rather simple-minded
 hours. Improved quarters for
 the pigs, meaning far afield;
 plus some horses silently
 shooting the grays at sunup.
 The quizzed quills found
their way past. (Or as one executed
Elizabethan poet to another, "Dreaming
of many we, excluding they, are awake indeed.")
It implies living for the differentials

a rash down the sides of row-houses
established by the sun that *settles*,
purveyor of order even while the
river driver, askance at all the reroutings,
 casts his gaze towards
 a grove of apple trees, along
 with transplants from
 one friendly star pool.
 To pole through the *un*-
 resolved gallery by
 turns plummeting, a unit
 technically of the upper air
spun of embrace and consignment, each one
on behalf of all its renewals—why is it
upwards of mystical good will bonding
the same guesswork to the dark

dangerous streets and the ginkos
forever redeeming them, so that on
reflection they branch out unreflectively
but lifetimes augur weight as well as plumage—
 one consequence of truth
 and its effortless
 lack of consequences,
 spreadeagled, the tresses
 swank in pursuit of the pure dark.
 Let them glaze their wish
 to be air traffic, of a medicinal sort,
 across a sort of carport
into which the nurses who wear their
beauty like the evening rush descend;
excluding some ugly outcroppings of
personal vehicles extended much too far

witness the armory and all it stands for,
roseness and bigness subtly curved
around news of future occupation
that stunned falls, careless as
 spilling hot coffee. If
 we could take a giant's
 view of an angel settling in
 for another outshining, alone
 of all who spend by virtue
 of that same weather compounded,
 who because the arguable
 stays, come away gracefully
beyond the mere grace of words, the pronoun
and all it knows about not getting caught
on the fire escape as so many things are
in their intent to wave eventually to bubble

right back to demanding an adjustment
optically and as a kind of translation.
How many mystic wood pheasants would
play Michigan spring beached aplenty,
 an indication that of all
 that has spilled, charm as
 much as unrest squanders
 in the sense of being
 other than what it foreswore,
 all the lofts teetering
 plus all the gulfs surfacing
 out of the normal deep water
—what with scaling down to the deep
romance of debt, typically or not
flooded like an illuminated peristyle, e.g.
the Chinese brother who all unthirsty swallowed

the sea. Let me not to the true
scattering admit stratagems of watershed
and illusory building outline, whatever
hamfisted buildings pile scraping Oneness
 in an arc that billows
 backwards, as though
 an avenue were a backyard.
 Quiet; you say,
 and no point in keeping clear
 of the citizen in his
 watchful walk through November,
 if and only if heel marks
are fatal: if it comes by cargo ship over
the starlight of things which aim upwards
of their outlines, the radii outwards
being the orange or conceivably oblong

incumbency rising steadily over
the downtown lofts, mingling
inside a system that readily dopes;
of flustered rooftops, radiant lintels,
 factory smoke puffing
 towards its anti-matter
 which gusts honorably if
 conscious of routinely leveraged
 buyouts, handouts making over
 the recompense from *burrowing*
 in the first instance
 and *landing* in the second.

At which point engineering ripples
along the peaks, mounted dry
like valor, if we could pry open the
deficiency.—Careful to be haunted

in pursuit of the needles which scatter
and blow about on end, not that we need
spiritual references to barge into
when styles change, *if* they do.

Use Wortley in a sentence.

The frog jumped into the
reflecting pool _____.

To shift like the future, all
pulse and fragrance.

What if we sloped easily, whereas
we are prevented by such
conspicuous trifles, only

relatively removed from woodland flowers
that habitually branch out, flame
among corpses of roots and leaves, as though
light green touched with white had spoken out . . .

effortlessly with provenance, bulked
in chunks and washes—odd that they have
even a small secondary imagination
when to get some genuinely public event
to attach riders remains
unfloated; while goat,
donkey, mule, cart
and lamppost sprinkle the
distance to burn off, each
small-town caboose plus
each receivership whiplashed
to contrive aureoles out of
the precise relations that don't see to it.
Like pedants (who never get enough *time*
given the celestial curve of their ambition
plus hope plus its meaner suburbs)

to random field days and above all
decorating along the same detached face,
the star of our self-regard, despite
occasional persons of mixed address
 ending up as musculature
 which is to say stoops
 and reddening sills,
 the public orchestration of
 self-denial taking a quantum leap
 onto the schist below—huddled
 as opposed to the seasonal
 venture that glosses its reprisals
like dentists embroidered onto the same
wallpaper, over and above the fallacy
of the beautiful rippling over people
who ripple into one another like mad

carrots sunk in the light of their occupied
zenith: a host of boarded up windows
behind which the natural laws keep to
their daily rectangle, black-letter
 and then crystal radio as
 a new troupe makes its
 way out of the cultural quadrangle
 inordinately abloom,
 proximity to foxgloves
 railroad stations ankle-deep
 even while the city supplies
 keyholes for the asking
the tributaries supply what we take for granted
in the elevator indicating what people
rise to when they aren't subject to
the grosser play of light and light's failing

to remain semi-solid, an Aztec sonata
introducing fruit-bearing motifs
to go with the horns. And it attaches
to hair and clothing, thickened
 the way apricots star
 in paint, and it doesn't
 make added sense to say burst
 from the full space between
 in the manner of a keystone,
 yanking and grabbing all
 to the much tuned modern orchestra.
O that a star sucks up
the low world at random, disinclined to connect,
while their materials pile sky high
at variance with theaters and the pre-war varnish
that irradiates, at variance with alarms

and let's hope, given the nature of light
and *its* celestial ambitions that the
time doesn't simply erode, but offers
shoppers the chance to pile into their
 wagons and the row-houses
 ahead, evicting above all
 the object-less now that
 some of the foolish ideas have
 been doffed for what they
 are, assemblages whose
 flickerings of life and color
 preclude the ship and its margins.

Forkfuls in shady plots, towed acreage
above all the bars and reflected sunsets,
the chief cup for mailmen here on earth,
decanters filled with wine and express civic virtue.



CHARLES SIMIC

FIVE POEMS

The stone is a mirror which works poorly. Nothing in it but dimness. Your dimness or its dimness, who's to say? In the hush your heart sounds like a black cricket.

"Tropical luxuriance around the idea of the soul," writes Nietzsche. I always felt that, too, Friedrich! The Amazon jungle with its brightly-colored birds chattering, but its depths dark and hushed. The beautiful lost girl is giving a suck to a little monkey. The lizards in attendance wear ecclesiastical robes and speak French to her. Just think of it! Not the least charm of the scene is that it can be so easily dismissed.

A black child wore the mask of comedy on a street of gutted, gray-brick tenements. It came from the ruins of the movie palace where it hung over the proscenium with its companion tragedy. O child in red sneakers, running . . . One expected to see one of the shadowy beauties of the silent screen sleepwalking in your wake.

He calls one dog Rimbaud and the other Hölderlin. They're both mongrels. "The unexamined life is not worth living," is his favorite saying. His wife looks like Delacroix's half-naked Liberty. She wears cowboy boots, picks dangerous looking mushrooms in the forest. Tonight they will light tall candles and drink wine. At midnight they'll open the door for the dogs to come in and eat the scraps under the table. "Entrez, mes enfants!" he'll tell them bowing deeply.

An arctic voyager with a room to cross. A large white room spectrally bright and speckless in the full light of the morning.

Far-off kitchen noises . . . If only he could impersonate the look of a stranger arriving on foot into a remote snowbound region with a sky dazzlingly empty and blue.

It was quiet in the room. He could feel the pins and needles in his new black suit waiting for the arctic seamstress, the zero on the tip of her tongue.

GERARDO DENIZ

FROM CASTLING

translated from the Spanish by Roberto Tejada

DIFFICULT

It's one thing to go back, and another to write about it
in the hostile hours that march by with stone maces.
How pretty they are, and what dolts.

The south tears the pennants to shreds,
a ship run aground on the blue coral of day.
The volcanos, things guarding an uncertain space;
and life, twisting itself right here,
is a weird orange tree.

A wooden idol comes down the tangled Dniéper;
the ramarro—lightning bolt—crosses the road.
They collide in this line. And then?
He who loved, will he tomorrow?

Twelve o' clock.
The sun sets the tablecloth upon the mountain
where a cloud arrives, lingers,
filthy with human being.

PRESENCE

It's this moss nearby
—*tongue in cheek* under illustrious evergreens—
opting to be born
in a tiny hunching of green shoulders.
Brought by the force of things
to disguise with its uniform tapestry,
it watches us step on it, passing by, all brains and bones;
total indifference.
It still surpasses us in certain things:
in the fauna it nestles,
in wanting wetness, but not water.

PRINCIPLES

What I write has the right
to say—for the purpose of rhyme
and all that of interest only to me—
that the grey dress
was green,
or to say it was Tuesday
when it was Friday—if I recall—,
or to explain that the ship hoisted skull and crossbones
because they were fumigating.
It has this right
and almost no other.

PEDREGAL

For Alfonso Rodríguez Díaz

When there were stars in the sky,
it started unrolling and the perforated map slowly sank
through the slot to make the guilty pianola
of the land play.

It gets dark and drizzles, and little by little
at the foot of the Ajusco a frozen anthill's set on fire;
they know how it's done: straight segments and possible
grids are noticed. Astrologists will come to explain.
For now, the view wobbles over points of light
like the clumsy groping of someone recently gone blind.

Silence in vast flashes of scant lightning.

CAPRICHIO

(in a state of drunkenness)

Mongoloid and dumbshit world—damn right!
Regard the trisomy in the Trinity; consider the sign
in the sky, in that whitish eight-in-the-morning moon
where the pricetag of all this
 was poorly ripped off
—while they have breakfast warming their hands with coffeecups
(the Yawhist, the Eloist, the pederast)
celebrating the invention of milk. Selah.

PHILLIP FOSS

THE PAINTED WINDOWS

*Through the empty arch comes
an air of the mind that blows
incessantly over the heads of
the dead . . .*

– Federico Garcia Lorca

As if a conspiracy
to refute reflection
or the condoning
of polished
interiority:

the landscape
inside a vase;
a house glazed blue:
the erection

of an eye,
that of a dragonfly;
or a darning needle
postured between
the fingers
as echoic

of a cigarette.
And, like goggles,
the hands are cupped
over the eyes,
palms tattooed
with goldfish,

to imitate
silk.

And the child
in the crib,
singing chords
like a *player piano*,
is a ventriloquist's
dummy.

The wall said,
 "redemption,"
causally introducing
 the saxophone
as an equation
 against the implied
coy: the wall
 has no window
other than as mouth
 for voice,
as such is painted
 with the landscape
projected beyond it.
 Yet, those walking
do not walk:
 a portrait
of death;
like singing of love
to a skull;
 the desire
to animate
 would participate
in animism:
 perceiving thighs
as repositories
 of bones capable
of fabrication
 into flutes:
sex.

The windows
 are black:
soot, darkness,
 blindness, sleep,
paint: fire,
 the division
of light,
 lost gnosis,
the coma,
 white.

The panes of glass
 burning in the fire
give off
 an inversion
of light
 in which the skin
of the hands
 can be removed,
like gloves.

Such behavior
is predicated
 on analysing
the dreams
 of the oversoul;
in the same way
 one can float
down a river
on the inflated skin
of a pig.

Windows of the soul,
 thus painted
in prostitution,
 perform a theater
of introspection,
 wherein lust
is a handmirror
 gloved in a wig:
a dionysian waltz
 executed bereft
of audience;
 the wine bottle
a magnifying glass
which, when looked
through, straightens
 the world
from its convexity.
 The *duende*
of the genitals
jumps up and down
with malice.

Suicide is then
 a critique of time,
as a mime's face
 is a critique
of immortality:
 how disease
and winter
 form a satyr,
their conversation
 braille
written with frost
 on a window.
Thus in touch,
 perhaps tenderness,
is dissolution
 and the view
is rectified,
 not telescoping
into limpidity
or ocular profundity
but, like myopia,
 the pane is cracked
by the invention
 of the forehead:
a crypt
 in which to seat
a bullet: idol.

HARRISON FISHER

POETRY AND TRUTH, AND OTHER DISAPPOINTMENTS

*text of a lecture delivered at the
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
in March, 1987*

I was taught that each and every poem has a “speaker” who is separate and distinct from the poet. Furthermore, two poems by the same author could and, in fact, probably did have two different speakers. This was conventional wisdom born of (T.S.) Eliotic autotelism, whose day has since been shorn from the calendar. It is a formal courtesy of no epistemological value whatsoever to hypostatize a mouth from which a poem comes. Autotelic implied-speakers—as well as Blanchottian corpse-authors or Poulettian mind-melds—are figments of theoretical hijinx that becloud by bechattering a simple situation. The poet, more often than not, has signed the poem, which settles the issue of who did it and who does it. Present day practice bears this out; you cannot have the stranglehold of “personalism” today without poets left and right firing their supernumerary speakers, which mass unemployment has undoubtedly caused a rise in self-expression, but that is a tale of horror for yet another drizzly afternoon.

Let me raise the question “What is the relation of poem to poet?” Poems are words *actually used* by a poet to be presented as a poem; I am not treating of aberrant non-literary or “post”-literary, media-drunk strains. Back to these words: they may communicate something that we would normally understand as an “interpersonal communication,” or something like that. To the degree there is this (appearance of) communication, that communication must be regarded as having moot truth value. That is, it may or may not be true of the world, or such cannot be determined; on top of this, I add that the communicate may or may not accurately reflect some state of the poet’s mental bearing. I personally try to misrepresent

myself in poems; I assume others do too—and why not? You deserve the best possible “me” for your contemplation, and I have no qualms about lying to give you that. It is not within the ontology of poetry or poems to dispense truths—not by design, anyway. Some, in casually skirting the obstacle of the logician’s “truth,” have arrived at the myth of “poetic” truth, a thing not unlike the *National Enquirer’s* biannual two-headed baby. The concept of poetic truth is itself taken as a poetic truth; therefore its truth is automatically suspect, as it merely satisfies its own impressionistic requirements. Robert Lowell on the subject of the “bent generalization” is pretty good about this. Operations that produce “truth” have heavy conditions placed upon them and are conducted only within very narrow limits, largely Aristotelian; this would seem to fly in the face of poetry. Any work a poem does toward producing truth is a function of reader idiosyncrasy, perhaps as a displacement of the lust for logic. Some people go to poems for “truth” or “truths” and they will find them, and I won’t, having my own agenda.

The debate has raged in print in recent years whether or not metaphors have cognitive content. And I am using “metaphor” as a metaphor for poetry, which is how it is used, a kind of shorthand promulgated by Jakobson’s seminal writings, however simplistic, specious, or ultimately catalectic that formulation may be (I am already doubting its cognitive content). Do metaphors have cognitive content? Of course they do. Of course they don’t. And while we’re at it, is the universe One or Many? We don’t get to resolve these things. This is a fact of the limits on our knowing. We make trenchant arguments and publish far too many of them, but we cannot produce truth pertaining to the greater matters. We have, instead, putative constructs that function suasorily and provisionally, having value as long as they have value, like William James’s “cash value,” which I don’t think is the hamstrung tautology it sounds like. Along this line of thought, I offer this irresponsible platitude, smarmy with nihilism: we have no hope for final entrance to the absolutes, like the nature of metaphor or universe, or, for that matter, the nature of nearly anything, since at the heart of ontological inquiry into any particular resides, in Beckett’s words, “blanks where the words won’t go,” an

environment seemingly inhospitable to both truth and poetry insofar as these are to be transmitted.

Let's take a turn for the worse. My own suspicion is that the poetry of, say, William Wordsworth parcels out truths in a measure about equal to that of the poetry of Rod McKuen or Walter Benton, who was McKuen's forgotten *vox populi* predecessor by a generation, whom I mention in all his desuetude in case you fear the prospect of McKuen canonization. Mind you, I have already enacted the separation of poetry and truth, so I'm not talking about real "truths" to be found in Wordsworth and McKuen, just appearances. Here's something from C.S. Lewis: "The process of living seems to consist in coming to realize truths so ancient and simple that, if stated, they sound like barren platitudes. They cannot sound otherwise to those who have not had the relevant experience: that is why there is no real teaching of such truths possible and every generation starts from scratch." Keeping this in mind, it just may be that McKuen at his most barren-platitudinous is disgorging ancient, simple truths, and I don't even find that scary . . . although you might because you would spare Wordsworth this odious comparison, but you cannot do it on the strength of his monotonous blank, a verse so unlimber it is every bit as trashy as Milton's, and Wordsworth in iambic tetrameter displays so insipid an ear that these poems alone rank him with the greats of unintentional poetic comedy, William McGonigle and the "Sweet Singer of Michigan" Julia A. Moore, who once said "The literary is work very difficult to do." If you are thinking surely on the basis of a straightforward comparison of content Wordsworth can be erected over Ramblin' Rod, I caution you: first, you will have to actually read *The Prelude*. As there is no reservoir of wakefulness so great it can carry a living being through *The Prelude*, as there is no mental salve so effective it can heal the scrofula of sentience the poem induces, the project must be foreabandoned. No content comparison can be made. I have read *The Prelude* and you'll just have to take my word for it. I am, by and large, right about poetry, truth, Wordsworth, and Rod McKuen, howsoever bad it hurts.

VOICE

Now that I have uncovered the ontological *heart of darkness* of poetry, namely, the necessary dispensability of Truth or truths, I am free to decorticate the concept of voice. I once referred in print to voice as a “fiction of jacket blurbs.” I stand by that pronunciamento. “Voice” diminishes the textual quiddity of a poem while foregrounding one aspect only: the comportment of possible utterance. It should be clear that this comportment is a corollary of the proposition I hacked away at in the beginning—that every poem has a speaker, from which it follows that every poem is spoken by its speaker. The reason it is a *possible* utterance, rather than some actual thing in this speculative tangent, has to do with the non-existence of the speaker, who is not the poet. Since the speaker doesn’t exist, these actual words on the page could not have been spoken by the speaker, hence the poem is only a possible utterance, and with these sophisticated critical apparati in place, you can proceed to a New Critical treatment of the poem, pointing out the places at which someone who doesn’t exist is being really ironic. The inherent limitations are mind-boggling; approach to the poem is warped by conventions so fastidiously narrow that exegesis smacks of tea ceremony. A great many poems, printed on the page, bear no similarity to anything someone real *or* imagined could say, so these poems right away evince the inappropriateness of the concept of “voice”—of course, there are elaborate rescue missions; we can posit the existence of a speaker for each phrase or line that hangs together in an otherwise wildly disjunctive poem, and then another speaker for the next few words, and so on—I’ve actually seen this in alleged criticism—until we have a congress of speakers, a congeries of their possible utterances, and quite the condom to keep our praxis healthy while inside this poem. Forget it. The poem is not a possible anything; it is an actual something. Nobody who isn’t real made it. More comment on this last.

A poem is a made-thing; this news is fundament and firmament, the baseline statement of *what is* that cannot be intelligently disputed. Some made-things aspire to be well-made things, perfect artifacts in testament to

their originary artifice. Forgive my ascription of human aspiration to these poems; I'm really writing about what are obviously writing behaviors of poets. Other made-things prefer to, and I should say "purport to," show off the processes of their making. The "process" challenge, the cant of the moment, will soon come under revision when its explanatory usefulness becomes tiresome, or its explanatory uselessness is seen nakedly. Until then, it's Okay to oppose "process" to "artifact" as a handy dichotomy born in philosophy and dumped on poetry, even though they are no more adversarial in concept than "form" and "content." Note well: the record of a process is still a *thing*. It is, in fact, the *only* thing we have, if the thing we are looking for is a poem.

Back to voice. Voice lingers as a hedge against the poem's thingishness, a forced reminder of human agency. Actually, voice is a conflation of two unrelated "voices" which I have already mentioned; one is the voice that is characteristic of the hypostatized "speaker" of the poem—the other is the "fiction of jacket blurbs," the voice of the poet, which presumably is the umbrella voice that authorizes and propels the littler voices that yammer each poem. This ventriloquistic scenario turns too far from the brute facticity of a poet making a poem. Inasmuch as I have banished unreal speakers, I can throw out their voices, too, so that first kind of voice is gone. Now, what about the poet's "voice?"

We have a word for what that "voice" is: style. To say a poet has a voice is simply to acknowledge that the poems by this person exhibit stylistic similarities, nameable or not, which we could eventually come to recognize as being part of or natural to this poet's behavior on the page. That's all. The squattest of my critics at this moment might complain, "You have simply deferred the problem of 'voice' by renaming it 'style.' " Well that isn't exactly what I've done. Style is style, which is a whole theoretical mess of its own, and, in fact, the theoretical mess that applies here. We don't have to pretend there is some other, separate mess called "voice." If we could aptly say, describe, and know what a certain painter's or musician's style is without referring to catch-all terms like Mannerist or Baroque, we might reasonably hope to do the same for a poet. Since the concept of style, however, stands on the broken bodies of aestheticians

through the ages, I believe we may be standing in the face of the ineffable again. It might be of some small consolation, then, to be able to discard the nugatory. "Voice" will do. From now on, you may only refer to a poet's "voice" when you have heard or overheard this voice in conversation and wish to comment on its timbre or sonorousness, or you are leaving a reading and explaining to your consort that you have no idea what this poet's work is like because he or she read in such a tiny, soft voice you couldn't hear a damn thing and now your evening is shot.

THE LINE

When we had meter, we had lines. Lines could be identified by their comparability to metrical paradigms. Their regularities were dictated; their irregularities were triumphs against expectation—like Shakespeare's "No! No! No! No! No!" Lines had ontological requirements arising from the contexts of particular poems, and a thing that puts into effect its ontological requirements may be said to have an ontology. If feet were the atoms of poems, lines were the substance, the stuff into which atoms were being organized. Lines *constituted* poems; 14 iambic pentameter lines effecting a predetermined, chosen rhyme scheme constituted a sonnet. Don't misunderstand me; this is not about to turn into a nostalgic plea for the good old days of metrical composition. It has to do with the history of a thing. I am getting to the fact that we used to know what a line is and now we don't know anymore because the function of the line has changed.

The line used to be constitutive in a "motivated" sense, this motivation obvious in the execution of poetic constraints—mostly dictates of feet, length, and end-rhyme. The line is now constitutive of poems only in the *de facto* sense that a free verse poem is "made up" of lines. We speak loosely of attention to sound and the sense-distortion of a novel enjambment between lines, but we are not discussing line-determinants here. Nothing determines the free verse line except authorial whim or chance or page width or harebrained missions of breath or nothing in particular. The line's present function is not to constitute a poem but *to*

signify the presence of a poem. The line, in other words, has merely a semiotic function. We “know” something is a poem not by anything intrinsic to poems, but by the breaking of the text into lines. Lines “create” a poem by telling us there is one present: this text, tellingly broken as it is. I must resist coming up with a half-dozen other ways of saying this. I imagine students in workshops all over the country right now asking their poet of the moment, “Why did you break this line where you did?” The correct answer is—and pay especial heed, those of you currently enrolled—“Because this thing I have written I declare to be a poem, and it must be broken into lines so you’ll know it’s a poem if I’m not there to tell you, and this place here in the poem is arguably as good as any other to have hit the return on my typewriter.” I am not being facetious. There are only very material things going on here, and they must be retailed materialistically. The line is an instrument of semiosis—what is normally called a “sign.” Augustine divided the world of things into word-things and thing-things, signs and referents, respectively. In these terms, it is easy to relate the transsubstantiation of the line: heavy with constraint, it had density and acted as a thing unto itself; pointing beyond itself to the poem, it functions as a word-thing. I am very sorry, but I have no plans for the rehabilitation of the line, nor am I convinced of the need for such a project, since the demotion of the line from thing to nonthing doesn’t seem to be wreaking havoc in my own practice. I just hit the return whenever I feel like it, usually early enough in my typographical progress across the page so that you’ll know you’re reading a poem, and I think that’s only fair. I mean, what if I suddenly decided that this thing I am reading to you is a prosepoem? I leave you to ponder the misery that announcement would cause while I prepare now to beat up *the image*.

THE IMAGE

WHAT MISCREANT first blurted the proposition that poems contain images? It certainly doesn't come from way back, when wandering rhetors blew into town with a head full of Homer, picking the verse up anywhere and reeling it off to all sorts of rhythmic percussive accompaniment in a trance-like state which facilitated the unimpeded roar of memory while spontaneously inspired dancers flitted about and the bulk of the spectatorial gathering hunkered down in the birth of the Funky Chicken; I'm not making this up—Eric Havelock is wonderfully explicit on this. I'm describing a typical poetry reading, which is not at all like one of our poetry readings because our poets don't have the beat and all the really good dances have already been invented anyway. When these gatherings broke up, the Greeks did not go home and talk about Homer's images. Even the shield is not an image, because to see the shield is to envision most of the *Iliad* all at once, which cannot be done. The shield makes good prose sense, having value particularly for those who cannot stay for the whole poem. It's a good *mise-en-abyme* and it tells the whole story but you cannot look at it. You can't really look at anything in a poem unless you stop reading and force yourself to do so. This is tantamount to performing an unnatural act with a poem.

All right, maybe the image does come from way back. Simonides, alleged to be the father of mnemotechnics due to a disastrous dinner party as told by Cicero in *De Oratore*, also said, or is said to have said, that a poem is a painting in words. This formulation led a good life historically because it was said in Latin, it is attractively glib, and it obviates the need to worry about what poems really are because, after all, they're only paintings in a different medium and anyone can understand a painting.

It is faithless to hold that just at the moment when words, given careful attention, are producing effects on a reader commonly associated with the reading of poems, that reader is seeing pictures. Surely, anyone can stop and will a picture into his or her mind. That is not, however, how we read poems; anyway, it is certainly not how I read poems. No eidetic resort comes into play, unless I am bored and daydreaming in the middle of a

poem when I am supposed to be reading; I will come back to this point and use it in a startling new theory. A reader cannot much be sold on words if that person habitually converts them into images. I am polemically compelled to heap execration upon the notion that this might be what occurs in regulation poem-reading.

What *does* happen is a mystery. Some fairly bankrupt phenomenologies of reading verging on cognitive psychology exist, and some of these have the ozone stink of electrodes about them. Some quantitative analyses, some readers' protocols . . . I am not so surly as to dismiss these entirely out of hand, especially as I have nothing to install in their collective place, but the reading practices they posit or describe are strictly alien. I still have the nagging question to repeat: why vaunt the visual over the literary at precisely the moment when the literary is supposed to be operating at its fullest?

I return to the Homeric situation, which predates alphabetical writing in Greece by as much as 500 years or as little as 200, depending on your source. You can imagine that had hieroglyphs caught on as the dominant writing system in classical cultures, such writing in images would make discussing poems in terms of their images woefully redundant. It may be that "images" are not intrinsic to poems but rather are something we are fooled into thinking about or attracted to believing in when we start from an imageless writing system. So the alphabet allows writings to be taken home on portable surfaces, and this eventually leads to *letteraturizzazione*, the phenomenon in which classical oratory and subsequently all literature, such as it was, moved out of the public forum and into private settings where essentially shy and lonely people took over the business of reading and writing. You can see where I'm heading. Attention wandered without a frenzied group to insist on its focus. By the time the Bishop of Hippo caught his teacher Ambrose reading *without moving his lips*, concentration was doomed, this even at the same time that Augustine had a friend Simplicius who could recite Homer backwards, just like Seneca used to do with other poems to entertain his students. Simplicius is like a throwback to the beginning when mnemotechnics overwhelmed the possibility of imagery, and Ambrose is the beginning of the decadent

modern world in which we read silently to ourselves. Not everyone is an Ambrose, by which I mean that the people who used to get by at poetry readings by hanging out in the back of the group and doing a little shimmy and shake to the Homeric drum now had to take the whole book home and *read* it. The onus for the transmission of the poem was entirely upon this individual to do it for himself, and his apocryphal failure is the birth of the concept of the “image,” which is what he called the pretty pictures he was looking at, sometimes suggested by the verse itself, when his mind blanked out somewhere between lines 10 and 33 on any given page. The “image” is mental static, call it daydreaming, that proves you were doing something else when you should have been reading. Combine this with the aforementioned compensatory opposition of the image to an imageless writing system. Add the pronouncement of one Simonides, who was born too early to know anything about poetry, and we have convened all that exists to keep the image afloat. I don’t read in images, you don’t either, so stop talking about them because such talk only degrades your interest in poetry.

EPILOGUE

I have wanted to say that truth in poetry, like “truth in advertising,” is a hopeless concept. I have debunked the usefulness of the term “voice,” finally recasting it as *style* where, if it cannot immediately be better understood, it can at least be better understood why it is not understood. I have disclosed the semiotic nature of the line, which could free us from discussing lines in contemporary free verse as if they had genuine technical import. And I have assaulted the notion of the “image,” finding it indicative of the paucity of our praxis in poetics that we resort to putative pictures to discuss poems. Maybe that is a consequence of the final, familiar constraint of not having a metalanguage—a language that can be used to discuss language.

Taken together, these complaints suggest flaws in the conventionalized terminology we use in the discussion of poems. I add, too cavalierly perhaps, that it is beneath one's dignity to assay poems in terms of their thematic content, though I have not argued the point here. What should be perspicuous is that at least some of our critical currency is as valueless and aslant from poetry as the common exultation that some poem "really works for me." These notions—line, voice, image, truth—only dubiously address anything important in poems or poetry. Our critical language is not out in front of us, and the laggard is causing epistemological misery, as I'm sure you've noticed it has become very difficult to say or "know" anything about poems lately.

CLARK COOLIDGE

ELEVEN NEW SONNETS FOR TED BERRIGAN

SEMBLANCE OMNISCIENCE

The sonnets an old as Russian adventure
New as whistling peace, I never
Knew a part as bad as this wrist patch
But there are men who seem to
Hold it under the mower, cede snow
To who? This night has bated its buyer
Past the one moon yet to dock, no risk
That a ventilator has signed my poems, a lock
On this doctor, *amazing* wind and loaf lessons
We turn, and the stub is central, falls
Pretends you knew which end was few
Enough to bend, foresees my end
The pencil out of crystals, fly of a flinch
So click your due, lend one moon to each

THE SIXTIES

I.

Dithered around, dithered about mere, never thought
About it, tongues, suddenly tears
Wheat flake, and then came the monkey flavor
I had nothing but seldom in the dell
The making up of things wither, no place
Everywhere but a man, a night of, sees
That in the morning lungs

Off-center fatalism, a neat pack a part
We all go and then voodoo, monkey see
All around the count there came the two blue men
Leather of helpmeets and the striver
All aid in pumps to the striver
And then it gets arranged that love will beat
A patrol of launchings into mount paper land

II.

Hey, Henry, repeat your dials
Mad as if quick were dead, and inflamed
Bounced and so theory of the quelled blue
Retreat, with the dirt heap flavor, marches
Pretension of bell lungs, it's restorative
And you are milder than the limping dad, my hand

When the dirty was heavy and I could style (loaf)
Barometer with coffee instead of foot the avenue
Have the mouth of miles but am not reconciled
To what walks, today not death, a handout
And then drifts when it breaks where we proceed
Bared as a coke in this our flag of need

III.

An original thought, box with a blow
And I am candy happy, having not, fraught no friend
Bubbly in the writing of a block goodbye
Shifting hello, make pen stew, how long fast
Mother and the string of repeaters I'd have
Not answered to go, some summer, some
Lie on up, leg or not, is it I
To greet, then whose farewell? A stopper
It tires and repeats, whose best returns
On Paris (an island) of this sign, a funnyfarm
The launching of a fungus, not death
Or no thing of such health, bright rings
For what is there will back be cited
Hovers on a number of drains the bell

IV.

Where we ourselves are free, we love the place to heave
Out of sight, such as the head and facing the wampum
It's late, the trees a gate, the heart a sum
And there is night and there is no such thing as a "pound"
Mistake, having to wait, gone for the throat of a divan carry
But it's after all who that falters gapes with plan
That and the marriage bureau, Truro hots and gone hang

Your pleasure was all the sands that measure
That and the plaque colonnade, made up in rock to true
I to live outside myself many times veins or the poem
You the one to affect the death of everything (arrangement)
A going off mental and defanged on his hands
And what I hate is a center, bangles
And the treatment out of air waves a you

V.

Mouse makes bare the tang of a frieze
Copsed as with handles, glee, and the makeup innards
I should have pardoned you for, tacking a shoe
Off in the lee of spells a barn owl apologized
But it's a comedy, this agate harming jar
Loose as the tool in a fool's well, then all's ill
But he's back, as he promised to state and the farm
Looked too veritable for the similar to tough its dance
Out in a minute (window), immersion of fools
And their curl of dwells that steal into the writings

A major is a farmer though the horse holds no dies
It's pound-off amazing, this scribbling limiter
Its ice-up, its falls, the main cake planned us
A begonia, far from taut reason and this haul state

VI.

The boy Aram planned to bring more in
But was stopped at his father's harm
We could go too but we hithered, stormed
In case in that blocky crate the two things
Fit and loudly, a horizon grew tongue and the street
We strung high and kept there, pill dawn bare
Somehow he's late and he stopped us as if
Toasts of the time were Dylan and windows
More and so, moving placebo an electric tan
Obvious mouth of Monday Monday at Venetian times

Man in the street of Aram's arms grew
Brown at his feet, a novel lapse, a liver
That we were told there, as joints grew speech a notch
Had harried a blinder emblem, and we were there

VII.

I am a man without a thought on yet
Get barer from declarer deals, miles bent sheets
Time's brawn shelf in the spontaneous bring
Housed in the globe of see-through fauna, Donna
And the tail (flog story) so seated in this farm
We are far as the calm from harm, told Keats
As kids wink and lengthen in the ice truck streets
A shame, as a pole in the main of shade
(O Shadow! O Sax!) the remedy dwarf of the docks
It's felt to be well when you so write it out
Drapes from your shoots, the apple white code
Of belly sending bar, we go alive, tears to the thighs
And make, on cradle-bending mark of grand fear deals
Would you shout, would you send all credos out?

VIII.

We lived there then, the crib of the bending hen
And crabbed and sorely waited, tending a desuetude
Not as striped as plumb digested, syllables
From the cogs, of richly dust the coming hems
Disgust us in authority, all shackled Ezra Pound
Not as stupid but just, cottonmouth answer
Well as the well I may well look for, times
That tobacco, lumps it in with, stooges, short
Parades, and the angel that tells you "tough!"
The ground of dreams once blossomed now is dead
A heap touching heads and heavy faces crane
Childhood, liver spots, quick like the lake
Accomplished with the lock its loss
Twice the occupation, heat and breath

IX.

Not as dim as the buck we tag to eat
A duck, perhaps, reheat then after me
They play those string things here, whenever
You start to move away, say things, scoot
Those matches come open after dark, polite
And it makes such weeds to hear me say this
An after-waste, buckle on the preen, momentary and

Such scorch things and then make them green
Again in halt, a motion glancing sticks
Then glide of flies at a pan of the desert
Clocks that witness the rim of my sundays
A washer to you, malarky in payment back
And it's sun locks the words here, has gone
To iron something to the picture you I picture

SPOKEN ON MY PART

But I had no further shocks, except when the cats
And I could have lunch, preempt remains and stand it
I'm tired but I'm not tired (igloo) but
They say the winter wheat is in and I'm shaking myself tan
To think on it, hovers over a dull, hot pencil remnant
School that is, and sunday steel and plunk your magic
Whatever remains to be sane to say, a lock on
The temple bells and sun coming louder when almost over
The clap I missed near the end of my stint, a new bent
No shit, last aisles, parquet arcade is realm of
The dwindlers so rare and wave, it's a lucky
And that's rushing past the shunt docks, okay
Remiss and left off the last track, the one all
Tucked in Ovaltine solo a place you never heard
My word



One thousand copies printed April, 1988 by Thomson-Shore, Dexter, Michigan. Text typeset in 10 point Times Roman, with display type in Omega Medium, by The F.W. Roberts Company, Belfast, Maine



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ISSN: 0896-3053